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AND

POEMS,

BY

EDMUND RACK.

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Philosophical Society, *lately instituted at Bath;*

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INTRO-

INTRODUCTION.

AN Author seldom finds himself more embarrassed than when he attempts to give an account of his own productions. The desire he feels to preclude censure, by assigning reasons for not having succeeded more to his wishes, and the fear of offering any thing that indicates presumption, confine him to a narrow path, which, to tread with undeviating steps, is extremely difficult.

Although I have not had any reason to complain of the reception my former publications have met with, I freely own it is with peculiar diffidence that the following work is laid before the Public.

When on looking over the very respectable list of my subscribers, I observe among them many who are justly distinguished by their
d refined

xxvi INTRODUCTION.

refined taste and eminence in the republic of letters, I feel the alternate sensations of pleasure and of pain. The honour they have done me is of too flattering a nature not to excite the one; but when I reflect how little there is in this work worthy *their* attention, it produces that anxiety which is natural to diffident minds on such occasions. It is however now too late to supply any defect, and apologies will be unavailing. I can therefore only rely on that candour which minds the best cultivated are always the most ready to exercise.

Several of the following essays were the employment of my leisure hours some years since in the country. As I had not at that time any view of publishing them in their present form, they were first printed in divers of the Magazines, and have since been mutilated, and very incorrectly copied, as original pieces, in other periodical publications.

Some of the poetry has also appeared in a small volume which I published in the year
1775;

INTRODUCTION. xxvii

1775; of which the whole impression, a few incorrect copies excepted, has been sold several years.

As I was known by many to be the author of the pieces above alluded to, and consequently stood chargeable with all the faults contained in spurious copies, it seemed necessary, even on *that account*, to revise, correct, and republish them in the present work. In this I have only followed the example of writers* eminent in the first rank of genius and of learning.

The poem entitled “the Castle of Tintadgel” was written some years since by, and is inserted at the request of, an ingenious gentleman of my acquaintance, and I flatter myself will do honour to the publication. The rest of the essays, letters, and poems, have never appeared in print.

How this work may be received by the public in general, time only can discover.

d 2

As

* Dr. Johnson, Dr. Goldsmith, Dr. Hawkesworth, &c.

xxviii INTRODUCTION.

As there is an almost infinite variety of taste in the minds of men for literary productions, some will probably censure, and others may approve, what I have laid before them.

The gay, the volatile, the superstitious, and the bigot, will find little herein adapted to their taste, and respective turns of thinking. But as these may probably attack me in opposite directions, the one will counteract the other, and I shall be supported by the contrariety of the assailants.

It is however to the liberal-minded, who prefer truth to mere opinions, and embrace it wherever it is found, that I have endeavoured to render this work agreeable.

There are many who, without the means of procuring or the opportunity of consulting numerous books, have an inclination for reading:—such may perhaps find something herein not wholly unworthy their attention.

Many

INTRODUCTION. xxix

Many of our youth are seriously disposed, and desire to act with propriety in the various relations of moral and social life. Sensible of the importance of cultivating their minds by reflection and study, they are open to instruction and improvement.

To lay before this class some considerations on subjects of an interesting nature, to encourage them in the pursuit of wisdom and knowledge, and excite them to practise those virtues from which the human character derives its dignity, has been the first and most ardent of my wishes. If there is any thing in the following pages which tends to promote these desirable and excellent ends, I shall be happy in reflecting that my labour has not been vain.

On a review of this work, the most pleasing emotions that I feel arise from a conviction that it contains nothing which can inflame the passions, or strengthen the cause of vice;—nothing which can promote bigotry, superstition, infidelity, or irreligion.

In

xxx INTRODUCTION.

In the characters which are drawn I have had no individuals particularly in view. Improper conduct itself has been the object of my censure, but not the persons who practise it. Equal care has been taken to avoid every thing that might appear to reflect on, or give offence to, any religious society. The subjects on which I have mostly animadverted are confessedly of importance to the generality of mankind, and worthy their most attentive consideration. I have neither attempted to refute, or to enforce, any peculiar religious opinions; nor to lead my readers into the perplexing and sterile mazes of metaphysical speculation, or abstruse polemical divinity.

I have not taken part with either disputant in controversies which tend to "darken counsel by words without knowledge;" to inflame without informing, and to divide instead of uniting mankind.

The principles and precepts which I have endeavoured to enforce are such as wise and
good

INTRODUCTION. xxxi

good men of all denominations agree in admitting; and the duties recommended to practice will not be deemed unnecessary by any who regard decency of character, and the sacred laws of religion and virtue.

With respect to the execution of this work, as I have not imitated the style and manner of any other writer, its merits and its faults are all my own.

Those who best know how arduous a task it is to write with "spirit, elegance, and ease," will be most ready to excuse the involuntary mistakes of a writer who has not had the advantages of a learned education.

As this work has been honoured with the names of many of the Nobility, and men of genius and learning, it would be inexcusable to omit attempting to express the sentiments of gratitude I feel on the occasion: I say *attempting*; for to express them fully is not in my power.

To

xxxii INTRODUCTION.

To the whole of my subscribers my thanks are due, and most respectfully presented; and as the names of divers were sent too late for insertion in the list, it is hoped they will excuse an omission which was on that account unavoidable.

To conclude:—My opinions of men and things are not confined within the narrow limits of any religious society or sect. I wish ever to feel in my mind that benevolence and liberality of sentiment, which annihilates all these *petty* distinctions, and views the universal family of mankind as brethren equally under the notice and protection of the Universal Parent and Source of all that is excellent and good.

Bath, December 2d, 1780.

It is hoped the few errors in orthography discoverable in the following pages will be kindly excused, as they are not of any material consequence.

E S S A Y S.

On TALKATIVENESS.

“ —Empty bodies yield the greatest sound.”

ANON.

SOME writer (whose name I cannot just now recollect) has observed, that “there is a wide difference between a man’s *saying nothing* when “in a mixed company, and having *nothing to say*.” This observation contains much truth; and it has been frequently verified, both to the reputation and disgrace of the respective characters.

Persons whose tongues are in perpetual motion “from morn to dewy eve,” are always disappointed, and sometimes disgusted, when they fall in company with one of your *silent men*. Being themselves strangers to thought and reflection, and accustomed, like parrots, to repeat by rote what they hear from others, they measure the extent of

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a man’s

a man's understanding by the number of words he utters when in their company. That silence, which is at once the strongest, and most delicate satire on the insignificance and nothingness of common small-talk, is, by such, attributed to a deficiency in sense and abilities for conversation. Your unwearied chatters value themselves highly on account of their volubility. They think every man beneath them, and unworthy of their favours, who cannot be as noisy and incoherent as themselves.

These geniuses may not unaptly be compared to those little bells the Chinese hang round their public temples, which are under no direction but that of the wind, but which every breeze puts in motion, and causes to give forth inarticulate and unmeaning sounds. As talking is the principal employment of their waking hours, and furnishes the greatest part of their happiness, silence is consequently their aversion. But notwithstanding their loquacity, they seldom take any care to regulate their conversation so as to render it either entertaining, rational, or useful. It is sufficient for them that they can hear *themselves*, and are heard by others. No matter whether what they say *means* any thing; sound supplies the place of sense, and by being indulged in their unmeaning verbosity

city they are happy. If a man happens to be silent in their company, they soon conclude he has nothing to say, and take great pains to be heard themselves, although what they are saying amounts to nothing. The same scanty portion of sense, which estimates the crude ebullitions of folly and inanity to be marks of wisdom, will always suppose silence to indicate a barren fancy, and a weak understanding.

I was lately a witness of the effects which silence (in a Gentleman who had much to say) produced in a company of voluble empty-headed prattlers, who took great delight in saying nothing to the purpose. The scene was in a stage-coach: a mode of travelling to me not disagreeable, as it frequently throws new characters in my way, which I generally contemplate with the taciturnity of a dumb spectator. I survey a new character with the same pleasing avidity that an astronomer would a new star, or an antiquarian a newly discovered coin, or relique of antiquity. But to return to the coach:— We entered, six in number, about two hours before day-light. The company consisted of a waiting Abigail to Lady Chatter; a rosy butler to Lord Bluffer; the hostess of an inn, who, having lately lost her husband, was in *weeds*, and had all the

care and weight of the business on her own hands; a perfumed milliner; a gentleman of great sensibility, and of a studious turn of mind; and myself. From the free use the major part of the *dramatis personæ* made of their tongues while the horses were putting to, I formed but an indifferent opinion of my company, except the gentleman above-mentioned, of whom I had some knowledge. Had not it been for the hope of receiving some rational entertainment from him, I should have put myself in a sleeping posture, at least till day-light enabled me to reconnoitre the enemy; but I was soon convinced this would have been in vain. I might as well have attempted to sleep in the workshop of a trunk-maker, or among the gossips at a country christening.

I presently found the Butler, and the three *Ladies*, (for so custom now obliges us to term all females who rank above the scowerers of brass and pewter) were disposed to give each other the clearest demonstration of their respective abilities in the science of talking. Each of them, like a bottle of new small beer, seemed impatient to get vent; and so fond were they of exercising their vocal powers in the discovery of trite common-place knowledge, that there seemed little left for the rest

to know. Law, politics, trade, fashions, good-breeding, were hauled into the dispute; but in such a manner did they *handle* and *mangle* every subject, that it was soon evident they had no coherent ideas about any thing. In short, their conversation was a mere chaos of senseless jargon, which tired the ear without conveying any pleasure or instruction to the mind.

In the course of the debate (which was carried on with much vehemence of sound) they would frequently appeal to the Gentleman for his assent to the justness of their remarks, and the wisdom of their conclusions; but as he generally answered them in monosyllables only, it was easy to perceive they soon formed a very contemptible idea of *his* understanding. This was, for a while, expressed by smiles, winks, nods, and half sentences; afterwards by more pointed proofs of disapprobation.

The waiting woman observed, with a toss of her head, that "every body isn't fit for company, " as my Lady says—that to be sure some was born " to speak, and others to hear and larn; and that " when a person have nothing to say, why he must " e'en hold his tongue, and hear them as can converse portlytely."

The

The Butler (rising into dignity as he spoke) remarked, that “ he had found by experience the
 “ office he *filled* (here his chest swelled) had greatly
 “ improved him; for that good liquors raised
 “ people’s genuses, and gave free *vent* to discourse:
 “ that every one, as they might see, wasn’t colli-
 “ fied for porlite conversation; but that them that
 “ was, should make use of their tongues for the
 “ benefit of them that cou’dnt speak for them-
 “ selves.”

“ Aye, aye, Mr. Fasset, (said the landlady) I has
 “ no notion of your dull souls, that can sit by the
 “ hour together like Methodisis, and say nothing
 “ but *yes* or *no* like children. My tongue (here
 “ she bridled up) have brought a great deal of the
 “ *best* company to my house; and between you and
 “ I (here she lowered her voice) they often tells
 “ me I am *never* at a loss what to say.” The word
never being pronounced with a strong emphasis,
 she adjusted her handkerchief, and looked round
 on the company for a confirmation of what she had
 asserted: This she soon received in a volley of
 compliments as awkward as they were insincere.
 The Milliner joined in the praises of conversation,
 and said “ she would as soon be a *nun* as to be so
 “ uncivil as to sit moping with her finger in her
 “ mouth

“mouth in such monstrous good company.—Why
“Ladies, it is so intolerably impertinent you know
“to be so stupid—One can’t bear one’s self—I
“should die of the vapours presently if I didn’t
“talk—And then ’tis always expected you know
“of *Ladies in my way*—Pray, Ma’am, isn’t this
“new blond a perdidgus pretty pattern—And this
“ribbon—I assure you, Ma’am, ’tis just imported
“from Paris—Oh how charming!”

At length I counterfeited sleep to avoid their
impertinence, and for an hour or two sustained,
without a moment’s intermission,

“The shock of nonsense ringing in my ears.”

About nine, we stopped to breakfast; and soon
after we quitted the coach, I overheard our fe-
male orators, in the adjoining room, treating us
with the greatest ridicule and contempt for our
silence, which the waiting-woman said “she was
“sure in such good company was intolerable, and
“could only proceed from our vast stupidity and
“monstrous ignorance of the world.”

My friend, as well as myself, being heartily tired
of their conversation, we discharged the coach, and
took a chaise the remaining part of our journey.
As we proceeded, I could not help congratulating
myself

myself on being thus freed from the impertinence of my late companions; especially when my friend made the following observations on the folly of estimating a man's character by the number of words he utters in a public or mixed company.

"I have frequently wondered, sir, (said he) that people who do not appear destitute of common sense, should deem occasional silence an indication of weak intellects, and measure a man's understanding merely by the number of his words.

"Were this allowed to be a just criterion, we might readily admit our late companions among the class who possess the *greatest* abilities. But these incessant talkers seem ignorant that, while they burden others with their impertinence, they are laying a tax on themselves too heavy for human beings to sustain. Sense and wisdom are articles so scarce in the commerce of the tongue, that no individual possesses a stock sufficient to distribute them in every company, and on all occasions. Men of real abilities and knowledge are so diffident of themselves, so conscious of the difficulty there is in talking sensibly and wisely on any subject long together, that in general their words are fewer than those of others. All conversation that
has

has not a tendency to entertain the imagination, inform the understanding and the judgment, or to improve the mind, is, to all sensible persons, unprofitable, tedious, and disgusting.

“ The passion for talking immoderately arises either from self-conceit, or inconsideration; a high opinion of themselves, and a mean one of those they converse with. These are all indications of a little mind, in which pride occupies the place of modesty and good sense. Did they but give themselves the time and trouble of *thinking* before they *speak*, they would not utter so much folly. Could they but see the motley figure their conversation would make *on paper*, I think they must receive such full conviction of its absurdity as would check their ardour, and teach them to be less ridiculous in future. They would, on a retrospection, be convinced of their own insignificance, and learn to practise that silence which the vanity of their own hearts have led them to despise in others.

“ In the course of my observation I have remarked, that persons who possess most sense and knowledge are the most cautious of discovering it in common company. They seek not to shine out of their proper sphere; and are generally sparing

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of

of their discourse in public. Such display not their knowledge through ostentation "to make the "unlearned stare," but reserve it for those who are qualified to receive it with advantage and pleasure, and repay it with interest. They have no pleasure in the common insignificant chit-chat of the vulgar, where mere common-place sounds are reverberated from one *solid* head to another, without exciting ideas or increasing knowledge; but when they cannot retreat from this penance, are content to suffer in silence. By these means they preserve their sentiments, till occasions offer wherein they may be communicated with advantage and pleasure both to themselves and others.

"The mind, like the body, must concoct and digest what it receives before it can be really benefited or benefit others by it. There is more advantage gained in silence and reflection than little minds can comprehend. Sentiments and ideas which are received without thought, and bolted out on every occasion unmatured by reflection and judgment, are like "the crackling of "thorns under a pot;" they are noisy, and may flash for a moment, without animating, and then sink and expire in smoke and darkness.

"The

"The mind that is collected within itself, and feeds on its own stock, will neither thirst after, nor relish, that vulgar vapid aliment, which floats on the impertinent tongues of the common throng.

"It is a kind of food, which reason cannot partake of, nor sense approve. But those superficial minds, who have no entertainment within themselves, who are indebted to the news of the day, or the puerile conversation of every one they meet for subsistence, are truly in a very pitiable situation. They verify the words of the Oriental moralist: "A fool is full of words, but the heart "proclaimeth foolishness, while a prudent man "concealeth knowledge."

On H A P P I N E S S.

———Alas! where shall we find
Some spot to real happiness confin'd?

Goldsmith's Traveller

THIS penfive enquiry has not been confined to the breast of the ingenious Poet from whom my motto is taken. In the hours of disappointment and adversity, it has been the general language of mankind. Beings who possess faculties capable of enjoyment unattainable in the present state of existence, naturally extend their ideas to a better life. This longing after *something unpossessed*, is the wish of every mind conscious of its immortality.

But the complaint frequently springs from causes of an inferior nature. It has often arisen from *real*, and still oftener from *imaginary*, infelicity. This hath been often increased, and sometimes wholly proceeds from making a false estimation of human happiness. Men are apt to place an higher value on every blessing not in their possession than on those which they enjoy. The prospect

prospect of every distant good is embellished with charms which lose their lustre on a nearer approach, or pall with familiarity.

It is not unusual with us to imagine the condition of others preferable to our own: we change our situation, but find not the happiness we expected; and yet remain unconvinced of our folly. We pursue, vainly pursue, the phantoms which the fervor of hope raises in the distempered imagination, although disappointment attend us at every step, and mock every endeavour. We either find the objects of our wishes recede in proportion to our advances towards them, or that, if gained, they prove inadequate to our expectations.

One of the most deceitful bubbles, that ever danced before the eye of human vanity, is *Wealth*. It glitters at a distance, and appears replete with all the requisites essential to earthly felicity. It attracts the attention of numbers from every other object, and kindles in the breasts of its votaries an inextinguishable thirst to acquire it. By weak minds it is considered as the summum bonum of sublunary blessings, and therefore, in the attainment of it, such think to exclude every want, to enjoy every satisfaction.

But

But alas! wealth often flies before the pursuer; and, in the end, leaves him tired, languid, and disappointed. To some indeed she grants her favours with peculiar liberality: but are these in "*a spot to real happiness confined?*" No surely: they find, by unprofitable experience, that the enjoyments derived from riches fall far short of their expectations.

Riches are not able to confer that happiness they promise; or to avert those evils which they are supposed to cure. They seldom fill the grasp of avarice, or limit the licentiousness of desire. They are insufficient to guard the avenues through which afflictions enter: to

"The branch that blooms with vegetable gold,"

Death pays no regard.

The possession of wealth introduces wants not less numerous than those we complain of in a state of poverty. They are indeed different in kind, but not less destructive of that felicity we vainly seek for in this imperfect state of being. We are apt to conclude, that those are exempt from unhappiness on whom prosperity beams her radiance:— In the erring estimation of superficial minds, "*their lines are cast in pleasant places;*" but a little reflection

reflection will convince us, that they often are "*encompassed with many sorrows.*" View those who have free access to the temple of riches, and you will not find them happier than other men. They not only feel numerous *wants* increasing with their acquisitions; but are often a prey to still more numerous *fears*, arising from those very possessions to which men in humbler stations are strangers. Some find their desires strengthened by the increase of their possessions: the more they inherit the more unbounded is their grasp. Were it possible for such to accumulate all the treasures of the earth, they would still be unsatisfied, and, like Alexander, weep because there was no other world within their reach to plunder. Others, who appear contented with their present possessions, are not less unhappy. Men cannot essentially possess more than they enjoy: the rest, like a cypher on the left hand of a figure, is of no value, unprofitable as to any useful purpose. It is only a barren splendor, which, like the glare of a comet, may indeed shine at a distance, and create awe in vulgar minds; but affords no warmth to invigorate him who gazes upon it. The possessor may contemplate it with barren admiration, but cannot render it subservient to the useful purposes of life. Such, therefore, who possess more wealth than is sufficient to furnish their
reasonable

reasonable wants, are generally employed in a laborious search after pleasures yet untasted, in which they hope to find an increase of happiness. In general they are disappointed.

There is indeed one source of refined pleasure, which the enjoyment of wealth affords to a rational mind. The extension of help to the helpless, of relief to misery, and of comfort to those who dwell in the vale of adversity, are employments in which we feel the purest satisfaction. To awaken joy in countenances strongly marked with the gloom of sorrow, is attended with the most refined sensations of delight, and attunes the soul to harmony. This is the noblest use to which wealth can be applied; the essential end for which heaven has dispensed it. But, amongst the great and opulent, how few there are who exercise themselves in such a course of benevolence and virtue! How few whose minds are sufficiently elevated to seek for the satisfaction arising from a conduct so truly estimable!

* The generality of the rich spend their time and substance in a course of falsely estimated pleasure, which, while it affords a momentary gratification to *some* desires, creates *others* more difficult to satisfy.

tisfy. Every indulgence of the passions beyond the limits of reason and temperance either excites the appetite for more criminal enjoyment, or cloyes with a languid satiety. These are effects equally destructive of true happiness. In this dilemma the mind of a man of pleasure is perpetually tossed like a vessel without a rudder in the fury of a storm. Still hurried along by the gales of passion, he pursues something yet untried, which he supposes more capable of conferring happiness; but this when attained leaves him equally dissatisfied, and at a distance from true felicity.

Thus, through the diversified paths of error, men pursue, with unremitting ardour, that happiness, which, for want of a better regulated judgment, they cannot attain; till, tired with reiterated disappointments, they quit the stage of life, and their fruitless search together.

It would be a mark of wisdom in us, to consider such examples as proper objects for our instruction. Viewed in this light, they may be useful warnings, and teach us to avoid the folly so strongly exhibited in their conduct. Let their errors and consequent disappointments excite others

to pursue a different plan;—a plan more likely to be attended with success.

Complete substantial happiness is not the produce of a terrestrial soil. While we tread the paths of human life, and are compassed with human frailties, the avenues through which happiness beams on the soul, will not in a sufficient degree satisfy or fill up our intellectual capacities: but still such a portion of it is within our reach as will render this state of existence easy and tranquil. The Sovereign Lord and Governor of universal nature has wisely ordained, that, amidst the highest gratifications we can enjoy in this world, some alloy should be experienced. By these means the mind is led to aspire after the attainment of that more perfect bliss, which, in the wise determinations of his counsel, we were formed to enjoy, when time and its deceptive scenes shall terminate for ever.

The terms on which this superior happiness is declared by the voice of wisdom to be attainable, are such as, if complied with, will tend greatly to the increase of our present felicity. We are told in the volume of sacred truth, that "Godliness is
" profitable to all things; having the promise of
" the

“ the life that now is, and also of that which is to come.”——The experience of wise and good men in all ages has proved its validity. The more we withdraw our affections from perishing delights, and endeavour to fix them on celestial objects, the more acute, pure, and refined, will our perceptions be of present pleasures. They will not be pursued to satiety, or abused with a wanton ingratitude.

Those joys, which the visible creation affords, will not be relied upon as a substantial lasting good, but rather considered as the lower steps of that ladder by which we may ascend from earth to heaven. By the “ good things that are seen” and which we are favoured to enjoy here, we shall be excited to seek after “ those that are invisible,” in that state where the aspirations of *hope* will end in certainty; and *desire*, in the complete fruition of eternal blessedness.

It is undoubtedly a mark of wisdom in us to seek, by every prudent means, for the attainment of that happiness which, in the wise order of Providence, we were formed to enjoy in the present life. Our passions are ever calling for fresh gratification; they are clamorous, and not easily silenced:

but we know that, if indulged without restraint, they would soon precipitate us into irretrievable ruin. It is therefore the province of reason to regulate them, to curb the roving of the will, and to point out those boundaries of action which we ought never to pass.

Whenever we thus submit to her wise restrictions, the commotions in our breasts will cease; our desires will be circumscribed; and, instead of repining at our lot, we shall be convinced the blessings we have received are infinitely beyond our deserts. This sense produces gratitude and humility, and thence spring true contentment and lasting peace: we are satisfied with those blessings which the munificent Author of our being has showered down upon us, and are most solicitous to make suitable returns for his unmerited bounty.

In this disposition of mind the purest happiness of this life is found; and herein we are best capable of becoming successful candidates for that superior felicity which will be the portion of the wise and virtuous in the realms of immortality and eternal life,

On

On CALMNESS and EQUANIMITY.

CALMNESS and evenness of temper are the effect of true wisdom, well-regulated passions, and an extensive comprehension of the nature of things.

Tacitus, in his character of Agricola, says, that he received from prudence one of the most excellent privileges man can enjoy, viz. “that of not
“being puffed up with the most unexpected suc-
“cess, but preserving, on all occasions, a soul
“superior to his fortune.”

The strength of men's passions is various as their natural complexion and genius: and it requires no small experience in the best and most profitable of all sciences, *the knowledge of ourselves*, to regulate, and keep them in proper subordination: this however is essentially necessary to the attainment of equanimity. By a successful endeavour to moderate the impetuosity of desire, we are best able to bear the shocks of ill fortune, or disappointment.

Horace,

Horace, in an epistle to one of his friends, represents *moderation of temper* as the *basis of human felicity*. It is doubtless an acquirement productive of the most solid advantages. There is no station in life wherein its good effects do not appear. It is constancy of disposition which sustains the vanquished, and completes the hero. There is more true glory in bearing either good or evil fortune with moderation and evenness of temper, than in gaining victories, or ruling over empires. How much, and how justly, has Socrates been admired for receiving the sentence of his death with mildness, and undergoing it with serenity! How greatly has Brutus been applauded for beholding with a steady magnanimity the execution of his sons, when justice and the Roman safety required that sacrifice!

But if evenness of temper be of such consequence to men in respect to the reputation of their characters, much more does it contribute to their safety and peace. The minds of some men, like shallow waters, are ruffled with every breeze; but he, who by the exercise of prudence and philosophy has so restrained and moderated his temper as not to be discomposed with trifles, enjoys far more satisfaction than those who, by giving the reins to their

their passions, are elated or depressed by every fortunate or disastrous event.

It is true some blessings (or at least events so termed) are of such a magnitude, that they overpower the understanding and judgment, and for a time transport those, to whose lot they fall, beyond the proper use of their senses.

Epaminondas, the noble Theban General, as soon as he had obtained the battle of Leuctra, and foresaw the importance of his victory, could not restrain himself from shewing the most extravagant demonstrations of joy. But when reason and reflection came to his aid, he quickly corrected himself, and the next day appeared in old cloaths, and in a servile manner: this induced one of his friends to ask him the reason of such change: "I do penance to day (said he) for that irrational joy I expressed yesterday."

In adversity, moderation does not only preserve us from contempt, but frequently assists us in finding remedies for our greatest misfortunes. A person in distress, who resigns himself a voluntary captive to the dominion of sorrow, and contemplates no other scenes but those of his own misery, doubles

doubles the weight of his ill fortune, and makes that a *perpetual*, which prudence might have rendered only a *temporary*, affliction.

Instances explain things of this sort more agreeably, if not more fully, than the most finished lectures. I will therefore present one to the reader which I lately met with in the Chinese history, and the recollection of which gave birth to the foregoing observations.

There was a certain Intendant of a province in that empire, who, out of regard to a particular friend of his, made him Chief Justice of the city where he resided. It happened that this Intendant, on a sudden, became inaccessible, and, under pretence of indisposition, would neither do business, nor be seen. The Chief Justice was extremely concerned at this behaviour; he came often to his house, but was denied admittance: at last, however, it was granted; and on entering, he found the Intendant in a very melancholy posture, he therefore intreated his friend not to conceal from him the real cause of his affliction. For a while the Intendant resisted the intreaties of his kind visitant; but at last told him he had lost the Imperial seal out of his cabinet, which yet remained

mained locked, and had no marks of violence upon it; and was thereby disabled from doing any thing, and cut off from all hopes of recovering this necessary instrument of his office. The Chief Justice bade him keep up his spirits, and, instead of despairing, apply the great abilities he was known to possess in contriving some means to get the seal again. The Intendant sighed, and said it was impossible. The Chief Justice asked him, if he had any potent enemy? Yes, said the Intendant, the Governor of this city bears a strong antipathy to me, because a friend of his missed the employment I now hold. Very well, said the Chief Justice, then I have thought of a method to set all this matter right; do you cause the most valuable of your effects to be brought into your inner apartment, and, as soon as they are safe, let the outward court of your palace be set on fire: the Governor, as it is his duty, will be forced to come to your assistance; as soon as he appears, deliver him the cabinet in which the seal was placed; if it was he who caused it to be stolen, he will be glad to restore it, and at all events the blame will lie at his door, not yours. The Intendant instantly pursued his friend's scheme: the fire drew the Governor thither, as they expected; the cabinet was delivered to him in a seeming fright;

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and

and the next day, when the danger was over, the Intendant sending for it again, found the seal replaced; for the Governor, finding himself overreached, wisely compounded, by thus returning the seal, for the fraud he had committed in procuring it. Thus the calmness of the Chief Justice proved a remedy, where a man of superior parts, but without equanimity, would have resigned every hope, and abandoned himself to despair.

There are numerous other advantages which result from the exercise of moderation and equanimity. It enables the wealthy to distinguish between liberality and waste, magnificence and profusion. It gives the man of narrow income opportunity to supply by œconomy what fortune has denied him; it restrains the courageous from hazarding their lives on trifling occasions; and furnishes the timid with expedients to conceal the imbecillity of their nature. It forbids men in power to revenge those injuries which are done them through envy, and checks the anger of those in low circumstances, who would otherwise improperly resent the wrongs they suffer from the great.

Thus in each sex, in every station, rank, and age, calmness and composure of mind is the source of
true

true tranquility, the great palladium of safety and of peace. It excites love, banishes fear, and establishes respect. It transmits to future ages the character of wise, as the just description of each who possesses and cultivates it. And although it may not raise the admiration of the public so high as some more shining qualities of the soul, yet it is sometimes capable of surprizing, though in a gentle manner, as appears from the following story of the Emperor Gallienus, with which I shall conclude this essay :—

It seems there were in those days as well as the present, traders who valued *money* more than *probability*, and thought large gains might atone for the most iniquitous fraud. A man of this stamp, who dealt in jewels, found means to be introduced to the Empress, and sold her a set of stones, rich in shew, but of little value; being in reality no better than coloured glass. This fraud, though concerted with all imaginable address, was by some means discovered, and the merchant of fictitious gems dragged to the public tribunal.

The Emperor, after hearing the charge, and examining the proofs, adjudged him to be exposed to a lion; and the people, ever greedy of blood,

ran in crouds to behold the execution. When he came into the area of the dens of lions, he was placed in the center by himself. The guards withdrew, the people gazed, and the trembling wretch, overwhelmed with horror, stood expecting his fate. On a sudden a door opened, and out came a cock, which, after two or three strides, fell to crowing and clapping his wings; immediately followed a cryer, who made open proclamation in the following terms; "*Behold, O Romans, the justice of your Emperor! This man, who made no conscience of deceiving in his trade, is now deceived himself.*" Who will deny that this act of lenity deserved far greater praise, than if justice had been allowed to take place in all its severity?

On COMPOSITION;
AND THE TOO FREQUENT
USE OF EPITHETS.

TO write with correctness and elegance is not so easy a task as the generality of writers imagine. It requires not only a considerable share of learning, and a general knowledge of men and things, but a taste and judgment to which few can justly lay claim. Men who possess a warm imagination and a lively fancy, seldom want ideas or words to express them in, but are often deficient in the severe and painful labour of rejecting such as are either improper or unnecessary. Gay imagery, flowery expressions, and sounding epithets, are apt to captivate the minds of young readers, and inexperienced writers. Hence it is, that many of the latter insensibly acquire a gaudy flatulent style, remote from true eloquence, and as devoid of the graces of chaste composition, as the daubings of a sign-post painter are to the correct but animated touches of a Correggio, or a Titian.

This

This mode of writing seems to have been introduced by the publication of Mr. Hervey's *Meditations*. The death of Abel, Noah, and other translations from the German and Asiatic languages succeeded them; which, together with divers publications of Dr. Harwood's, greatly contributed to establish a false taste in literature. For a while they had numerous readers. The infection spread wide, and, although it might not injure the morals, it perverted the judgments of those who caught it. Among writers distinguished only by a poverty of true taste and genius, many imitated them. The gaudy tinsel with which these publications abound catch the attention of superficial minds much sooner than the chaste and truly elegant diction of our best authors.

What might have been the consequence, had not some men of correct taste and judgment checked their career, it is not easy to determine; perhaps the energy and strength of our language might soon have been frittered down into a motley jargon of unmeaning sounds, in like manner as the strong powers of harmony, awakened by Handel and Correlli, appear now to be exchanging for the effeminate tweedling of modern Italian composition.

Epithets

Epithets too freely applied enfeeble our language, by multiplying words without enlarging our ideas. When improper, they debase it: yet it is possible to reject them with too much severity.

Swift has been called the purest, and most correct of all English authors: but to me his stile is not so pleasing as that of many other writers. He has a correct coldness, which wants animation. He is always chaste, but seldom sublime. His stile rarely offends, but is often deficient in the power of pleasing. He appeals to the judgment, without warming the heart, or interesting the passions; and where his writings are not enlivened by the acumen of wit or satire, they soon become tedious. This is not the case with the works of Steele, Addison, Arbuthnot, and many other of his contemporaries. Swift's stile may be compared to a highly-finished Grecian statue—their's to the same statue animated with Promethean heat.

Superficial readers are caught with the tuneful cadence, and pomp of description, which soothe the ear, and glares in the pious pages of a Hervey, while sometimes it murmurs as the liquid lapse of a softly-flowing stream; sometimes swells indignant like an impetuous torrent foaming down a
craggy

craggy precipice. The one lulls, the other astonishes; without improving the judgment, or enlarging the understanding.

But no man of true taste turns away fatiated from the natural imagery, simplicity, and classic elegance, of an Addison, or a Melmoth, a Robertson, a Hurd, a Blair, or a Gibbon. In their compositions the pure and simple shades of nature are beautifully blended, and imperceptibly melt into each other, while (as an elegant writer expresses it) "the skill of the artist seems lost in the beauty of the workmanship."

It is with books as with the fairest part of the visible creation: a certain plainness and neatness of dress, and simple elegance of manners, render a woman infinitely more attractive and engaging than the glare of paint, the profusion of gay apparel, and the airs of coquetry. These may dazzle the eye for a moment, but reach not the heart.

Having written thus far, sleep waved his ebon scepter over me, and the pen dropped from my hand. Imagination was however still active, and I seemed to be sitting in a room with a committee of the Monthly Reviewers, who were engaged
in

in criticising a modern publication, which shall be nameless. Suddenly, a short effeminate being, puffed up with wind like an inflated bladder, waddled up to the table, and delivering in a sealed paper, retired. The Chairman broke the seal, and finding it addressed to the *Corps*, read as follows :—

“ To the MONTHLY REVIEWERS.

“ *The Humble Petition of* EPITHETS.

“ Honourable and Erudite Gentlemen,

“ WITH the most profound veneration we humbly address you, and beg leave to lay our deplorable case before you, secretly hoping, that in your great wisdom, and tender mercy, you will freely grant us a full, fair, patient hearing, and kindly condescend graciously to afford us that pleasing redress we submissively crave at your learned and scientific hands.

“ We have for some years past had infinite reason to fear that our acceptable reception among persons of fine taste and sublime genius was increasingly lessening. Some of our inveterate enemies, such as the chaste and elegant Melmoth and Blair;

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the animated Robertson and Gibbon; the sententious Hume, Hurd, and Ferguson; the judicious Dean Tucker, and argumentative Beattie; have almost banished us from their simple pages. These self-sufficient authors despise our friendly assistance, and in their naked writings comply literally with the restrictions imposed on evidences in public courts of judicature, in "telling the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." The contempt with which we have been treated by these writers, and the neglect shewn us by others, who once kindly admitted our ready aid to fill up a barren hiatus of thought, clearly convince us of their ungrateful ingratitude,

"With grievous sorrow, and sorrowful grief, we deeply deplore our forlorn fate, and secretly mourn in melancholy musings the memory of our dear departed friends and protectors. They approved us, loved us, cherished us, and called in our friendly aid in every flowing, every lulling line—flowing tuneful as the melodious voice of solemn song—lulling as the listless lay of drowsy insipidity.

"From the great, essential, and eminent share we had in filling up their rich pages, many young
writers

writers considered us, and we began to consider ourselves, absolutely necessary to all authors. Many of those ephemeron literati, who feebly flutter in the mild morning, droop beneath the fierce fervors of sultry noon, and die with the chilling damps of cold evening on the direful decisive day of publication, eagerly enlisted us in their service. Sometimes our toil was hard. Sometimes we have kindly filled up a wide space, which, without our friendly aid, the costive writer must have left a perfect vacuum. Sometimes, cruelly crowded in a lame line, we had scarcely room to breathe with freedom.

“Our services became at length so conspicuously eminent, that, for a short series of revolving years, every thrumming muse, and addle-brained authorling without any muse at all, constantly courted us with arduous sollicitude. They freely owned, that without our kind aid they were unable to furnish either tuneful odes, piously dull rhapsodies, metaphysical systems, sublime contemplations, or modern discourses for the pulpit. But, alas! the short-lived pleasing scene is changed. Since our above-named, cruel, inveterate, relentless enemies have refused us admission into their works, many others begin to look shy upon, and neglect

us. Like half-starved Spitalfield weavers, we are now most of us out of employment, and hardly dare shew our heads in good company.

“ Therefore, the fervent prayer of our peaceable petition to your respectable reverences is, that in order to re-instate us in our late conspicuous situation in the illustrious works of learned authors, you will graciously give us all due and proper encouragement. We know not of any way so likely to recover our lost reputation, as to gain admission into your work: and therefore most humbly, solicitously, and passionately, crave employment at your honourable board as a corps-de-reserve on occasion; and with constant, uniform, arduous, incessant prayers for your increasing success, beg leave to have the high honour of submissively subscribing ourselves,

“ Your Reverences’ neglected, but

“ Humble Petitioners,

“ EPITHETS.”

Difference

Difference between PRECEPT and PRACTICE.

If parts delight thee, think how Bacon shin'd,
The greatest, wisest, meanest of mankind.

Let modest Foster, if he please, excel
Ten Metropolitans in preaching well;
A simple Quaker, or a Quaker's wife,
If not exceed in doctrine, yet in life.

POPE.

THE learned and ingenious Doctor Johnson has observed, in one of his essays, that "though the speculatist may see, and shew the
"folly of terrestrial hopes, fears, and desires, yet
"every hour will give proof that he never felt it."

A little acquaintance with the world will evince the truth of this remark,—a truth which opens a large field for contemplation. Practice seldom keeps pace with theory: the latter may be easily attained, but the former requires a vigorous exertion of the mind. From a deficiency of practice in some who have attained a large share of theoretic and speculative knowledge, men of nar-

row

row sentiments and weak understandings have often exclaimed, with more zeal than wisdom, against speculation and theory. But such should consider, that although people may stop short at theory, and neglect practice, yet there can be no right practice without some knowledge in theory.

In proportion to the strength and cultivation of men's faculties is their usefulness when they apply themselves to practise the precepts of wisdom and virtue. A man of small abilities may become a good member of civil society, by acting properly in his own little circle of duties; but those of enlarged and well-cultivated minds only are capable of becoming eminently useful, and standing forth the illustrious instructors of mankind.

But it is much to be lamented, that men's actions should so rarely correspond with those principles and maxims in which they profess to believe, whenever such principles and maxims clash with their interests or passions. The spring of all action lies in the will, which, in order to be free, must be capable of a wrong as well as a right direction. The will is generally more influenced by sensation and the passions than by reason and just reflection. The artillery of human passions often disorders

orders and puts to flight the best regulated forces of the understanding and judgment.

The judgment may indeed assent to many propositions as true and reasonable, which seldom make impressions on the will strong enough to regulate its false bias, and direct its operation on the passions in such a manner as to produce proper action.

Many men have investigated with successful diligence almost every subject within the reach of the human intellect. Their minds, by constant application to study, are enriched with the most valuable treasures of scientific knowledge. Yet some of these are as inconsistent in their conduct, as great slaves to their passions, and as destitute of real virtue, as the illiterate and unenlightened vulgar.

I mean not to ransack the secret chambers of the tomb for examples; or expose to fresh ignominy, by reciting them, the names of those who are now removed beyond the reach of our censure or praise. This task is as unnecessary as it would be painful. Among those of equal eminence for abilities and learning in the present times, some
may

may be found whose practical characters exhibit
“*darkness visible.*”

Many others, less criminal both in principle and conduct, are deviating as widely from the paths of rectitude and virtue as those

“ Whose souls proud science never taught to stray”

in the fields of learning. When their passions solicit for intemperate gratification, their boasted superiority vanishes, and while they have been unprofitably busy in forming rules for others, they have neglected the more essential duty of a well-regulated practice.

Thus some men, whose eminent talents might have rendered them subservient to the noblest purposes, have too often demonstrated the inefficacy of their own acquirement in properly influencing their own conduct. Their learning and skill in philosophy and science has not rendered them better men: they have not filled up their various stations in social and domestic life with greater propriety than the vulgar. This is a convincing proof, that great abilities and extensive learning, merely, are neither essentially necessary nor sufficient of themselves to constitute men good moralists or real christians.

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Let it not however be thought that I condemn or despise fine talents or the advantages of a liberal education, although it is not my lot to possess the one, or to have been favoured with the other. On the contrary, far be it from me to degrade them. It is only the abuse of them that I deplore and censure. They are advantages highly to be prized, and demand our gratitude; but they do not constitute either the *summum bonum*, or *summum totum*. Something still more excellent is wanting to perfect the great end of our creation. Whoever rests in these accomplishments, without striving to realize the true maxims of wisdom in a conduct corresponding with the sacred precepts of divine instruction, will in the end “*be weighed in the balance, and found wanting.*” It is not only necessary to know, but to practise in proportion to our knowledge, if we would become virtuous and useful members of civil and religious society. As every day brings its share of labour, so every accession of knowledge enlarges the sphere of our duty. To perform this duty with propriety is to us of the greatest importance.

It may indeed be alledged (and perhaps with some truth) that the *works* of many of the Literati, whose lives have exhibited a sad reverse of the

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maxims

maxims they taught, may extend their influence much farther than the *actions* of their authors;—that they will survive through ages, and enlighten regions which could receive no hurtful impressions from their practical imprudence and immorality. But when it is considered how apt the influence of bad example is to become more prevalent than that of bare precept, and how much greater the number is, who see their actions, than read their compositions, the argument will lose much of its force. Philarchus may preach like an angel, or write with the perspicuity and elegance of a Tully; he may, on these accounts, be admired by many, and prove beneficial to some of his auditors and readers: but if the next day he quarrels with his neighbours, is seen drunk at a tavern, or swears profanely in public, every spectator sees the impropriety of, and is hurt by such disgraceful conduct. In this case, the learning, the abilities, the eloquence, of Philarchus cannot repair the injury done by his actions. The secret clue of causes and effects is infinitely diversified, and reaches beyond the ken of the most penetrating eye. One bad action may imperceptibly extend its influence from wheel to wheel, till the whole macrocosm is disordered: it may give motion successively to innumerable latent springs which may not cease to
operate

operate for ages. It is the same in the moral as in the natural world;

“ Whatever link we strike,
“ Tenth, or ten thousandth, break the chain alike,”

In our imperfect estimation of mankind, we are too apt to be biased by the lustre of exalted mental accomplishments in favour of those who possess them. But when it is considered that such have greater opportunities than others of excelling in usefulness and virtue; and that in all their misconduct they act against stronger convictions than other men feel, the turpitude of their morals will receive an additional shade, and that veneration will decrease with which we have been wont to view them.

The bulk of mankind, although not formed for entering into curious speculations, or making nice distinctions, can generally form a right judgment on matters of fact, and quickly discover impropriety of conduct that falls under the cognizance of their senses. Whenever, therefore, they see men who profess the most refined and elevated notions of virtue and vice; who can mark out their boundaries to an hair's-breadth; make the nicest distinctions, and most accurate definitions;

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when,

when, I say, these very men are led captive by their passions, gratifying every sensual appetite without restraint; actuated by ambition, cruelty, and revenge like the lowest of the vulgar; and in their daily practice giving the *lye direct* to the precepts they teach in public; how contemptible must be the idea formed of them and their fine pretences! We are immediately ready to exclaim on such occasions, "*The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau.*" Common sense will naturally conclude, either that the precepts they teach are a solemn farce only calculated to keep the vulgar in awe, or that those, whose pretences and practice thus widely disagree, are far more criminal than men of less enlightened understandings.

These are considerations which ought, in an especial manner, to have weight with all such as undertake to instruct mankind either in the station of authors or ministers of every denomination. To such they may be useful. The most excellent maxims of moral or religious truth lose their force when they flow through impure channels. It is reasonably expected that men who instruct others should not deviate either so frequently or so widely from the rules and practice of virtue, as those who
have

have not been favoured with so large a portion of light and knowledge. It is not enough for them to be *negatively*, they ought to be *really* and *actively* good, by becoming practical and bright examples in the discharge of every religious and social obligation; and to lead as well as direct others in the paths of righteousness. If they are deficient in this important duty, a duty, which, from their office and station becomes on them peculiarly obligatory, all their specious pretensions are but a kind of solemn mockery, and will only increase the weight of their condemnation at that period when every disguise must be stripped off, and the heart discriminated at the bar of Him who *judgeth righteously in the earth*, and will render to every man a reward, not according to his *pretences* but his *works*.

T O S P R I N G.

HAIL beauteous SPRING! sweet season, kindly hail!
 I greet thy mild approach. Thou like a coy
 And tim'rous maid, hast long withheld thy charms
 From our possession, and by slow degrees
 Unveil'd thy beauteous face. O lovely stranger,
 Joyful we meet thee with exulting voice,
 And wide extend our long-expecting arms
 T' embrace thy tender offspring! At thy approach
 Nature awakes, and, from the frigid arms
 Of ice-clad winter starting, smiles around.

The Snow-drop, herald of thy beauteous train,
 Has spread her argent standard, and proclaim'd
 That Thou, that Thou art near: Now quick succeed
 The humble Crocus, and bright Daffodil,
 The Primrose, in whose eye the chrystal tear
 Each morn stands lovely; and sky-tinctur'd Vi'let,
 Now ush'ring in thy legions, scent the vale.
 Thy legions, numerous as the stars of heaven,
 And gay as Iris' bow, will soon adorn
 Th' enamell'd lap of Nature. In varied forms,
 In varied hues, the sport of Nature's hand,
 Pleasing to every sense, numerous they rise
 Along the mountain's side, th' embosom'd vale,
 The groves, the lawns, and newly-cultur'd fields.

In this soft season, when the air breathes balm,
And ev'ry breeze bears incense on its wings;—
When the flow-rising Lark attunes her song,
And Philomella chaunts her varying lay,
In notes mellifluous ecchoing through the grove;
Each sense is wak'd to joy, and pleasure reigns
Through every part of nature. Every class
Of sensitive existence shares that joy,
And feels the vivifying glow that shoots
Through all their systems. Vegetation feels
Nature's propelling pow'r. Warm'd by the sun,
The late stagnated sap, now rarify'd,
Bursts from its inmost channels, and protrudes
The swelling buds, soft leaves, and pregnant flowers.
The same fierce ray, which paints the cherry's cheek
With deep vermillion, and the tulip's cup,
And bright carnation, with the rainbow's hues,
Pierces the mountain's womb, and deep pervades
The beds of minerals. Hence the shapeless ore
Receives its firmness, and the di'mond gains
Its sparkling lustre: hence the jasper glows,
And bright carbuncle flames. Beneath the wave
Shoot forth, with leafless arms, the coral groves,
And sea shells harden into marble. There
Myriads of beings sport, of shape and size
Astonishing to man. O! what extent
Of thought can comprehend thy glorious works,
O Source Divine! Protector, Parent, Friend
Of all creation! Earth's contracted span,
This little scene of things, a prospect yields,

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At which, in deep amazement lost, the mind
 Feels all her powers suspended. But THY power
 Is boundless as that theatre of space,
 Where scenes unnumber'd rise and speak thy praise:
 And, when the intellectual eye has rang'd
 Where twice ten-thousand systems blaze on high,
 And circling worlds around their central suns
 Roll in harmonious order,—all the views
 In prospect, or in vision contemplates,
 Is but a point, an atom, when compar'd
 With the unbounded universe.—

In this mild season, when the sighing gales
 Sweep softly o'er the foliage, and expand
 The tumid flowers, "sweet is the breath of morn,"
 And sweet the notes of birds in blooming groves:
 Thick spring the herbs; the painted meadows smile;
 Rejoice the echoing hills; the aspiring trees,
 In purest verdure clad, and blossoms gay,
 Wave with the gentlest breeze. The insect tribes,
 That people every leaf, and plant, and flower,
 That croud the mantling pool—or with light wing
 Winnow in noon-tide blaze their easy way
 Through balmy æther—All, exulting, feel
 The blissful influence of returning Spring.

Allur'd by thee, at ev'ning let me range
 The fragrant fields, and thought-inspiring shades
 Sacred to contemplation. Here the mind,
 Delighted, wanders; and in converse sweet
 Communes with thy fair offspring, and ascends

From

From *means* to *ends*; to *causes* from *effects*;
Till, rising gradual up the scale of things,
The intellectual eye, enraptured soars
Above th' "Aonian Mount," and milky way.

While thus, exploring Nature's scenes, the soul
Drinks deep at Pleasure's fount, and joy extends
Through all her powers, and grateful tribute swells
The hallow'd lay, in language wing'd with praise
To Heav'n's Almighty Sire. He sits enthron'd
Above the highest heav'n; yet watches o'er
His whole creation with a parent's eye,
A more than parent's care; he still surveys
All beings, worlds; and, from his sacred stores,
Show's blessings, with munificence divine!

ON THE
USE AND ABUSE OF MEN'S TALENTS.

Progressive powers and faculties that rise
From earth's low vale to grasp the golden skies,
Though distant far from perfect, good, or fair,
Claim the due thought, and ask the grateful care.

DR. LANGHORNE.

THERE is nothing more amiable and truly noble in human beings than to think modestly of themselves, and charitably of each other;—to make use of every opportunity for refining their ideas, and improving their minds;—to entertain and cherish sentiments of the Deity suited to his greatness, and the perfection of his attributes;—and to crown the whole by a correspondent course of action.

The little we are capable of knowing with certainty, even respecting the objects most familiar to us, conveys a humiliating lesson to the pride of man: while the numerous opportunities of improvement that we enjoy, are so many incitements
to

to vigilance in the acquisition of knowledge. The means of improving ourselves and helping others are put into our hands; and we are entitled to esteem or censure as we improve by, or neglect to use them. Indolence, in this part of the great business of human life, is criminal in proportion to our abilities to be useful, and to the claims society has upon us for our assistance to repress evil, and promote that good from which arises its felicity.

Every man is capable of being useful in some respects to others; and by his connection with society cannot stand an indifferent spectator. If he does not accelerate, he will retard some motion in the system, and thereby increase its disorder. He who, with talents capable of being employed to the service of others, sits down with views that center wholly in himself, and neglects to employ them farther than his own necessities require, is guilty of a breach of trust for which he must one day be accountable.

We receive numerous benefits from the exercise and application of other men's abilities; and therefore owe the exercise of our own to the common wants of society. In order to become

52 *Use and Abuse of Men's Talents.*

useful and respectable members of it, we ought to be diligently employed in promoting its various interests.

The author of our being has wisely proportioned, and adapted the understandings and faculties of mankind to the general good of the whole. By some peculiar modification of their frame, we find their pursuits differently directed. Hence the unconquerable disposition in some men to particular studies in philosophy and the arts, which in the view of others have no charms: hence their indefatigable industry in traversing the most barren and craggy regions of science,

But however such may be censured by the severe, and despised by the ignorant, they, by constant perseverance, become valuable members of society. *Reamour*, who dwelt among cobwebs; and *Swammerdam*, who spent most of his time in ditches, have both contributed largely to the public treasury of knowledge. Were men in general to be active in their own proper spheres, and each exert his abilities in that line which nature and genius point out, the clouds of ignorance would soon be dispelled, and much of the unhappiness whereof we daily complain would cease to exist.

The

The talents of some men seem peculiarly formed for the acquisition of wealth: In others there appears to be an irresistible thirst after knowledge. In both instances nature has shewn her frugality; for to be at once rich and wise is not the common lot of men. Both are however useful in their stations, while they act therein with propriety. The duties of each are great; and if they neglect to fulfil them, great will be their condemnation. The rich man fills a station wherein ample opportunity is afforded him of doing much good in the distribution of his wealth to the poor, the hungry, and the naked, among his brethren. He is surrounded by those whose afflictions claim his sympathy and assistance; and to whom he may lend a part of his treasure, on the best security and most profitable usury. The man of great abilities, who employs them in the acquisition of wisdom, moves in a sphere of still higher dignity; and is qualified to bestow benefits on society far more valuable. He may instruct the ignorant, and correct the vulgar prejudices which ignorance and superstition have spread among mankind. He may set the great duties of social virtue, morality, and religion, in a clear and striking light. He may excite in the minds of others just and honourable ideas of God's perfections

fections, and the wise administration of his providence throughout the œconomy of human nature, and in the moral world; and by these means not only increase the present, but promote the future, happiness of his fellow beings.

To pursue this course of action, both the rich and the wise man have every incentive that can give energy to a rational mind. If they confine their views to the present life, by what other means can an equal degree of honour and happiness be obtained? If they extend their prospect to a future state of existence, on what better foundation can they hope for the enjoyment of a peaceful and glorious immortality?

But the testimony of past ages, and our own observation in the present, give ample proofs, that among both the rich and the learned, too many have so far deviated from their respective duties, as in the disposition of their wealth, and application of their talents, to counteract the noblest purposes for which these blessings were given them. The rich man's views, in the acquisition of wealth, have centered in himself, or been extended to the gratification of his passions and pride. He has amassed (and sometimes by
means

means which a generous mind would reject with disdain) a larger portion of this world's goods than falls fairly to the lot of an individual. In proportion as his treasures increase, his heart becomes contracted. The kindly feelings of sympathy for the distresses of others grow weaker and weaker. He becomes insensible of the duty of charity. He hears the complaints of the wretched without emotion; and sees the affliction of suffering indigence, in all its sad variety, without pity. In this situation, and with a mind so sordid, he becomes an enemy to the happiness of society, by engrossing an unreasonable portion of that wealth, which, in hands more generous, would be applied to the noblest purposes; and employing to the injury of others, those very means which Providence has favoured mankind with, for the salutary purpose of promoting their happiness.

If we consider the conduct of some men of distinguished talents, the prospect will not be more pleasing. Many of those whose faculties are strong, and adapted to the successful investigation of science, have been still greater enemies to the general good of society.

Conscious

Conscious of their superiority in mental accomplishments, they often sacrifice, to the ideal phantom *Fame*, those talents, which, if properly employed, might prove a blessing to mankind. Others, resting in speculation, have neglected practice. While their minds are exercised in the pursuit or distribution of knowledge, their actions give the lie to their own precepts, and render them as reprehensible as the unlettered vulgar. Possessed of abilities, by the strength of which they can ascertain the boundaries of truth and error with the nicest precision, and, in theory, delineate virtue in the most lively colours, and with the most expressive accuracy, they still cherish in themselves, with criminal indulgence, those very vices to which by nature they are most prone, and which are perhaps the objects of their public censure.

Others have endeavoured to sap the foundation of all religion, by publishing sentiments destructive not only of its purity, but its very essence. Under the specious pretence of rescuing the minds of men from superstition and vulgar prejudices, they have relaxed the sacred obligations of virtue and morality, and poisoned the minds of those they pretended to instruct. Of all the prof-
pects

surrounded.* Let such enjoy the satisfaction arising from these Gothic sentiments. No wise man will envy them the triumph of their own ignorance over abilities which they never can attain, or join them in notions so far beneath the dignity of reasonable beings to entertain.

When the Deity formed man, he endowed him not only with power adapted to his animal wants; but with a capacity of contemplating the divine perfections in the amazing scenery of nature, and of ranging the moral and intellectual worlds in search of knowledge.

“The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord,” lighted up with a spark of celestial fire, designed to illuminate his path through life with increasing radiance, and finally to rejoin its sacred original fountain, in the full lustre of a “perfect day.” To improve this capacity to the utmost, by employing it in the investigation of truth and science, is the indispensable duty of man. Wisdom is that inestimable treasure which will never fail. It will enrich, adorn, and exalt the mind
to

* None will be offended at this paragraph but those who are proper objects of censure. Such there are, and for these only it is intended.

to objects suited to its dignity throughout all the successive stages of its eternal existence.

Vain, very vain indeed, are the idle clamours which weak and bigotted men have made against speculation, human learning, and the refinement of the understanding. Incapable themselves of rising to that dignity which the human intellect can sustain, they strive to bring others down to their own standard of dullness and of folly.

But to exercise our faculties in the investigation of truth; to examine with an honest solicitude, what is presented to us under that sacred appellation; to expose error though under the most sanctified garb, and to "vindicate the ways of God to man," are employments which Wisdom has applauded in all ages:—employments which are in themselves the most honourable, and will afford permanent satisfaction, when all these clamours against them shall cease.

The ignorant rich man may glory in his riches, and boast of his talents to acquire them; he may squint an insulting sneer at the wise man, because of his inattention to this world's treasure; but when these two are weighed in the

balance of truth, how far superior in dignity will the latter appear! Good sense and

“Worth make the *man*, and want of it the *fellow*,

“The rest is all but leather and prunella.”

An Erasmus in rags is more estimable than a Cræsus in all the trappings of royalty. Avaro, with the fortune of a Nabob, is in the scale of intelligence but little superior to the animals that draw his chariot—perhaps in real usefulness much below them. Eugenio, with barely enough to procure him the common necessities of life, has a capacity little inferior to that of an angel. If you converse with Avaro, his ideas extend no farther than the calculation of interest, the course of exchange, the rules of quadrille, the chances at a billiard table, or the properties of a coach-horse or a pointer. But spend an hour with Eugenio, and you will be charmed with his fine sense and improving conversation. He will lead you through the flowery regions of science; unlock the secret springs, and explain the wonders of Nature; reconcile the seemingly jarring phenomena, and trace the sacred hand of Deity through all the beautiful variety of his works.

GOD

GOD AN UNCHANGEABLE BEING.

THE unchangeable nature of the Deity has been always considered by wise men as the grand foundation and support of all true religion. It is this which gives lustre and stability to all his attributes. Whatever perfections he has displayed in the immense plan of his works, they immutably reside in him, and constitute a part of his divine essence. A constant sense of his unchangeable perfections, and essential rectitude, would most effectually prevent the intrusion of error into the human mind. Were this sense suitably impressed upon us, we should not form ideas of the Supreme Being, that are inconsistent with his dignity, as a pure, holy, undivided, unchangeable, and imperishable Essence, perfect in all his attributes, and righteous in all his dispensations.

But although reason concurs with revelation in giving us this general idea of the Creator, our particular knowledge of him is for the most part negative. We are better able, in many cases, to
judge,

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GOD

GOD AN UNCHANGEABLE BEING.

THE unchangeable nature of the Deity has been always considered by wise men as the grand foundation and support of all true religion. It is this which gives lustre and stability to all his attributes. Whatever perfections he has displayed in the immense plan of his works, they immutably reside in him, and constitute a part of his divine essence. A constant sense of his unchangeable perfections, and essential rectitude, would most effectually prevent the intrusion of error into the human mind. Were this sense suitably impressed upon us, we should not form ideas of the Supreme Being, that are inconsistent with his dignity, as a pure, holy, undivided, unchangeable, and imperishable Essence, perfect in all his attributes, and righteous in all his dispensations.

But although reason concurs with revelation in giving us this general idea of the Creator, our particular knowledge of him is for the most part negative. We are better able, in many cases, to
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judge, and determine, what the Deity *is not*, than what *he is*. Such is the weakness of the human intellect, such the limited extent of our faculties, that we cannot contemplate on infinite perfection without admitting ideas which can only relate to created beings. Divinity in the abstract is a subject too sublime for *human* (perhaps even for *angelic*) comprehension.

In thinking on the nature and attributes of God, it is very difficult to banish from our minds the ideas of form, limits, passions, and human weakness; although we are certain that all these are totally incompatible with the nature of a Divine self-existent Being.

We know that by his omnipresence he is ever united to, supports, and is intimately connected with all creation. By his omniscience he pervades all things, and is continually conscious of every circumstance of action throughout the universe. With Him, past, present, and future, are the same—all the vast scenes of time and of eternity lie ever open to his view:—At one comprehensive glance his infinite mind takes in the whole extent of his works.

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From these considerations arises the most substantial and powerful conviction, that however mutable *created* things are, the Creator himself must ever remain unchangeable. And from hence also it unavoidably follows, that nothing which is done by any of his creatures can affect him, either by giving him any accession of happiness, or by exciting in him the emotions of grief, anger, or displeasure.

Some of my readers may probably think this too bold an assertion. They will perhaps say, it contradicts the literal sense of divers passages in the Scriptures. This objection I hope to remove by observing, first, that the Scriptures afford many texts whose plain and literal meaning is directly opposite to those on which the objection is founded;—that in this case those only are to be understood literally, which are most consistent with the nature and attributes of a supreme, all-perfect Being: and secondly, that a close attention to the subject, will exculpate me from censure, by tending to confirm my position.

I shall therefore endeavour to establish this great truth, that God is, in every sense of the word, *unchangeable*, not only by shewing that the
passages

passages of scripture alluded to ought not to be literally understood; but also by pointing out the contradiction and absurdity that must naturally follow, were we so to understand them.

Wherever we find parts, passions, form, and mutation, applied to God in Scripture, we ought ever to suppose that such expressions were only adapted to the weakness, prejudices, and narrow capacities, of the bulk of that people to whom they were addressed; and who, in conformity to the theology of the heathen nations, had formed no higher ideas of the Supreme Ruler of the Universe, than those nations entertained of their local and titular deities.

Thus when the Almighty is represented as receiving additional pleasure from men's obedience to his commands; or as being angry, in consequence of their neglect and disobedience; nothing can, in the nature of things, be intended by the terms pleasure and anger, in this case, than that the consequence of such obedience, or disobedience, will be the same to men, as though their conduct really produced such passions in the Deity.

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When men, by a careful observance of the Divine laws, act consistent with the grand end and design of their being, they enjoy all that peace, happiness, and internal complacency of mind, which result from the favour of the Almighty. On the contrary; when they neglect their duty, and disobey his commands, they bring on themselves that anxiety and distress, which in the divine œconomy result from such misconduct: but in neither case can their actions affect the Deity by any accession or diminution of his happiness, or produce any change in his will towards them.

In the wise constitution of God's moral government, Pleasure and Pain are the inseparable effects of Virtue and Vice, here and hereafter; while HE, unmoved by the giddy whirl of successive events, sits enthroned in his own essential glory!—HE can no more change than finite beings can be unchangeable!

This will perhaps appear still more evident, if we consider, that no being can change but from one of these two causes—either *its own volition*, or the impulse of a *superior power*. From the latter, GOD is exempt, because he is the supreme

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fountain of *all* power. All voluntary change in any being must proceed, either from a desire thereby to become free from some present inconvenience, or to acquire some distant good. But the Deity, not being capable of sustaining any inconvenience, and from all eternity possessing every possible good, nothing in the whole circle of creation can furnish a motive to any change in him. He is God, and changeth not.

Secondly, if such passages of Scripture, as seem to imply a change in the Divine Being, were to be understood in a literal sense, the most absurd consequences would unavoidably follow. If the Deity could receive any additional pleasure from obedience and rectitude of action in his creatures, it necessarily follows, that *previous* to their obedience and rectitude, *his* happiness must have been imperfect. On the other hand, if men's disobedience or evil actions could excite uneasiness or anger in God, then, in proportion to the degree of that uneasiness or anger, his happiness would be decreased. In either case it is making the happiness of God to depend on his creatures. And if this proposition were admitted, we must (from the rapid progress of vice in all ages) conclude the Deity more miserable than any other being.

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These are some of the consequences which necessarily result from supposing God changeable, or capable of being affected by the actions of human beings;—consequences which, even to name on any other account than to expose their absurdity, were little less than blasphemy. When men thus think of, and address the Great Object of all Adoration, they are guilty of idolatry by erecting in their minds, and worshipping as God, an image which their own folly has formed.

But, strange as it may appear, these erroneous notions of Deity have given birth to most of the superstition which has disgraced religion in all ages. Upon this foundation, a *false faith*, and its attendant train of unmeaning forms, rites, and modes of worship, have been established; whilst that pure, simple, rational religion, which is most consistent with the nature of an holy, perfect, unchangeable Being, and alone acceptable in his sight, has been neglected and contemned.

The obedience and service which God requires of men in all ages is immutable as his essence; being a perfect surrender of the heart and affections to his will. This is a service, which, as dependant beings, we all owe to Him, and from

which alone true felicity flows:—a service which, although it can add nothing to his happiness who is compleatly perfect, puts mankind in a capacity of enjoying every good both in time and in eternity.

Rewards and punishments, both here and hereafter, are, in the divine appointment, the necessary consequence of right and wrong action in moral agents; and do not proceed from arbitrary will, or any change in God's disposition towards them.

Their being happy or miserable cannot affect the Creator. He who is supremely perfect in himself cannot change: "I am God, and change not."—"He is not a man that he should repent." Hence arises the hope, hence is derived the certainty, of the wise and good in all ages. All nature proclaims the goodness of the Deity; and the consciousness of this goodness being unchangeable, awakens gratitude, and excites to obedience. We know that, although all human things have uncertainty inscribed upon them, this principle standeth sure upon an immoveable basis.

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When we exalt our thoughts to the contemplation of Him who is the center of all perfection, the source of every thing that is excellent, great, and good, our minds should be covered with the most humble reverence. He is indeed perfectly good, almighty, and glorious, beyond the comprehension of not only man, but perhaps of any created intelligence. It is therefore no less than impiety in us to impute that to Him, which constitutes the imperfection and weakness of his creatures. This is indeed casting a shade over the lustre of his character, and "changing the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like unto the corruptible man;" and debasing, as far as we are able, his adorable character in the view of mankind. Errors of this kind are not merely speculative: they have an unhappy influence on our practice. The natural effect of men's notions and ideas of God will ever be a conduct more or less similar to such notions and apprehensions. Thus we find that men, who represent the Deity under the character of an arbitrary, capricious, changeable being, generally manifest a similar disposition in their conduct, and "glorify him not as God." Let us therefore, under a humiliating conviction of our own weakness, ascribe to him every excellent attribute, and rejoice

rejoice in his unchangeable goodness. This is a source of unfailing hope through all the vicissitudes of being. If we are blessed with the smiles of his favour in this life, grateful thanksgivings are due. If afflictions are allotted us, and every other comfort is withheld, the wise and the good have this remaining for their consolation, that "He is the same, and his years shall not fail."

ON AVARICE, AND THE PROPER USE OF RICHES.

“The poor rich man’s emphatically poor.”

AS there is no evil beneath the sun more dreaded than the supposed evil of Poverty, so there is not any imaginary good more assiduously fought after than the possession of Riches. They are supposed capable of procuring every pleasure, which, in this state of existence, the human mind is wont to desire. Hence the multitude rise up early, go to bed late, and, with an impetuosity equal to their wishes, endeavour to compass the golden mountain, from which all happiness is supposed to be derived: but experience daily teaches them the futility of these pursuits and expectations.

Amongst those who look upon wealth as their greatest good, a very few only are capable of terminating their labours in possession, or their hopes in fruition. A train of unforeseen events baffle their endeavours; disappointments meet them in
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a narrow way, where escape is impossible, and opposition vain; their most shining prospects are clouded, and their warmest wishes remain ungratified.

Some indeed there are, who have found means to avoid every impediment which inadvertency on their part, or the craft of others, might cast in the way to impede their progress towards affluence. Fortune has smiled upon them: they have been her distinguished favourites. Every plan they have laid, every scheme they have undertaken, has proved itself to have been prudently concerted by the success with which it was attended.

But, alas! of this superior class, whom a gracious Providence has surrounded with plenty, few seem to enjoy, and still fewer make a proper use of, the unmerited bounty. Circumscribed within the narrow circle of covetousness and self-love, many of these starve in the midst of plenty, and, although amply furnished with the good things of this life, are still miserable.

Incapable of rational enjoyment, they *worship* their wealth instead of using it. Insensible of the
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just tribute of gratitude to the fountain from whence all blessings are derived, they are constantly repining against that Providence whose goodness is inexpressible. Blind to necessities which a benevolent mind would relieve without solicitation, and deaf to the plaintive voice of sorrow, they pass through life unhappy in themselves, and unprofitable to those around them.

If there are any miserable objects for whom charity can dispense with the obligations of sympathy, it must be those who are miserably rich and penuriously affluent. Such are guilty of a sin highly dishonourable to a rational being, and not only contemptible in the view of every generous mind, but displeasing in the sight of Heaven.

Could such men, but for a moment see the deformity of their own hearts and conduct, as it is seen by the wise and generous part of mankind, surely shame would co-operate, with the voice of reason and of duty, to work a reformation.

Gratitude, in its various degrees, is a duty incumbent on all dependant beings, from the most exalted Seraph to the lowest order of rational intelligence. Every individual ought to cherish it

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in his breast towards the great Superintendant of the universe, the Author of every blessing. The goodness of God is displayed through all Nature, in a manner, proportion, and degree, which, although not to be fully investigated by the feeble efforts of the human intellect, is doubtless perfectly consistent with the rectitude of his own attributes and design in creation.

His mercies are extended over all his works. "He causeth his rain to fall on the just and on the unjust." Therefore gratitude is obligatory on all, but more especially on those who possess a larger share of blessings than falls in common to the lot of man.

The "lines of these are cast in pleasant places." Their inheritance is assigned them in a "southern land." They may enjoy a relaxation from the cares of life, and walk continually in the enlivening beams of prosperity, while numbers not less worthy groan under the pressure of adversity.

But notwithstanding the means of enjoying life are in their own power, such men are often more unhappy than the peasant whose daily bread is procured by the sweat of his brow. The cause
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of this infelicity is, that their wishes keep pace with their acquisitions. They indulge an inordinate desire after "something unpossessed;" which, like the raging thirst of a fever, dries up every source of comfort, and prevents the grateful reception, enjoyment, and proper application, of those blessings which a Gracious Providence has allotted them. The enjoyment of their wealth is postponed to the evening of age, while the best part of life is sacrificed to the labour of acquisition.

Avaro pleased himself in pursuing with unremitting ardour schemes for raising a fortune to retire upon when he should arrive at the age of sixty years. But he experienced disappointment at the very period when he had proposed to have secured success. The darling passion of earlier years "grew with his growth, and strengthened "with his strength;" and age, instead of dissolving, rivetted the chains that bound him to this world, and increased the horrors of that approaching period when he must relinquish his treasure for ever. As the golden mountain increased, he became more and more sensible of the power of its attraction. No plan was formed, no scheme attended to or executed, but such as

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contributed to fill his coffers, or lengthen his rent-roll. To gain money, every yoke was easy, every burthen light; every hardship was submitted to with chearfulness, and all dangers were encountered with heroic fortitude. His constant application to business employed both his time and faculties; and a care equally arduous, to keep what he had acquired, was exercised to the prejudice of his health, and at last hastened his death.

Thus Avaro, the *poor* rich Avaro, enervated his body with fatigue, suffered his spirits to be spent at the oar, and dissipated his reasoning powers by a long succession of schemes terminating only in the enlargement of a fortune which he neither wanted nor could use. At the age of seventy he began to see his folly, and retired to enjoy the fruits of his labour. But he soon found, that at this period of life every capacity for enjoyment had either lost its sensibility, or was supplanted by infirmities, which every hour gave him alarming notices of his dissolution. Nothing was now left him but the barren contemplation of treasures which he could never enjoy. Even this was now productive of but little pleasure, on account of the daily intimations he received that he must shortly quit them for ever. He was a perfect stranger

stranger to rational pleasures, or the still more sublime delights arising from acts of benevoience. His friendship and services having never extended beyond himself, he was now neglected by all, except those who from interested motives watched hourly for his exit. In this situation, every symptom of approaching death was dreadful, as he knew it would divide him for ever from the only thing on earth for which he had any regard. His infirmities thickened upon him: he looked with expiring anguish on his strong box, and died unlamented.

Beyond the limits of this world, let me not presume to trace him. All that I intend, by giving this outline of the character, is, to deter others from following his example. It is certainly the duty of those, who possess the means of rendering this life happy to themselves and others, to enjoy the bounty of Heaven with temperance and moderation; and, with the super-abundance of their wealth, to relieve the distresses of the poor, and comfort the afflicted. Affluence gives its possessors no more licence to spend it in wanton profusion, than to become miserable misers. To sport away wealth extravagantly, or to hoard it up unprofitably, is equally repugnant to the dictates

dictates of reason—equally offensive to the Munificent Giver of all good. The surplus of our wealth might be nobly employed in acts of real charity. The widow, the orphan, the oppressed, the unfortunate, and the afflicted, who silently shed their tears, and spend their cheerless days in obscurity and sorrow, have a just claim to our bounty, and are the proper objects to receive it. It would cause them to rejoice; and, in thus administering to their necessities, we offer a sweet and acceptable oblation to the Universal Parent and Friend of Mankind.

The perfection of human excellence consists in cultivating a kind benevolent disposition towards all our fellow-creatures, and to preserve in our minds a grateful reverential sense of the obligations we lie under to the greatest and best of Beings. To attain this is true wisdom, and its end will be permanent felicity.

THE BANKS OF THE AVON.

WRITTEN IN MAY 1779.

COME, heav'nly Muse! and with poetic fire
 Once more thy humble vot'ry's breast inspire:
 Yield now thy smiles,—thy sweetest influence yield,
 While waking Nature decks the painted field:
 To Thee he consecrates the votive lays;
 To Thee and Spring, he dedicates the praise.

See, where the winding AVON softly glides,
 With many a villa rising on its sides:
 There bending willows bending willows greet,
 And Peace and Plenty on its margin meet;—
 Sweet Peace, with silver pinions wide display'd,
 The mind attuning, hovers o'er the shade;—
 And Pleasure here her choicest treasures pours,
 From her full horn, along the fruitful shores.

When meek-ey'd morn, with rosy-tinctured wing,
 Reveals to view the beauteous scenes of spring,
 A thousand mingled hues salute our eyes,
 Gay as the radiant bow whose bend supports the skies.
 Here TEMPE's vale is realiz'd in view,
 And fair ARCADIA's beauties blush anew.

Hark!

80 THE BANKS OF THE AVON.

Hark! in yon grove, sweet Philomel complains,
 And breathes her tender tale in pensive strains;
 While high in air the Lark's melodious lays
 Swell in wild notes of tributary praise.
 What rich perfumes, what tuneful accents rise!
 All balm the air, all harmony the skies.
 See o'er the hills (in vernal beauty gay)
 The Flocks, all peaceful, innocently stray.
 Beneath yon pines the blythesome shepherds sing,
 With rustic notes the vocal valleys ring:
 For now, while Beauty frolics o'er the field,
 To joy, to love, their waken'd passions yield.
 The shady copse,—the cowslip-scented vale,—
 The cool recess,—the gently sighing gale;—
 The linnet's notes,—the stock-dove's plaintive song,—
 The stream soft murm'ring as it glides along;—
 All, all conspire to tune with joy the mind,
 Joy unmolested—extacy refin'd!

Nor is the bliss confin'd to Man alone,
 All nature feels it;—all its influence own.
 The gay-plum'd tenants of the shade rejoice;
 The flocks and herds all join the general voice:
 The finny tribes, that sport in Avon's stream,—
 The insects glitt'ring in the noon-tide beam,—
 The smiling flowers, that deck the humble mead,—
 The waving groves, that crown the mountain's head,—
 All speak a language vocal to the mind
 By reason tutor'd, and by sense refin'd.
 Here Zephyrs, sporting on the breast of May,
 Breathe softly o'er the trees, and in the branches play.

Here

Here Flora blooms in all the pride of spring;
There Music wakens every trembling string.
Sweet are the notes, that musically flow,
Along the silver stream serenely flow.
Joy fills the vales;—with joy the hills resound;
And mirth and pleasure reign the region round.
Wash'd by thy current, tow'ring to the skies,
See BATH's proud domes, and splendid structures, rise;
Where grandeur, pomp, and elegance, combin'd,
Superior shine; nor can a rival find.
High o'er her turrets, see th' aspiring hills,
Whose height the mind with pleasing wonder fills;
The craggy rocks that frown on *Beacon's* brow,
And spread far round a length'ning shade below;
The pendent woods that *Beechen-Cliff* adorn,
Whose steepy side is "rough with shaggy thorn."
From these aspiring hills, the wond'ring eye
Beholds, wide spread beneath, the beauteous city lie:—
Beholds the Circus gracefully extend,
The stately Square, and Crescent's ample bend,
Where Art and true Magnificence conjoin'd
Form the just image of the master's mind.

Turn now the eye, where, on Avonia's side,
BATHEASTON rises in theatric pride:
Blest Vill!—where loves the tuneful Muse to rove,
Where Genius haunts the consecrated grove
By MILLER rais'd; in whose accomplish'd mind
Are sterling sense and spotless honour join'd;

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Whose generous breast, with pity wont to glow,
Feels, and relieves the plaints of human woe.*
To this sweet spot Apollo's Sons retire,
Lov'd by the Muse, and pregnant with her fire:
Here Wit, and Verse, and Friendship form a feast,
Approv'd by Reason and sublim'd by Taste.
Sweet are the shades that round this mansion rise;
Here a new Eden blooms before our eyes:
In bright cascades the foamy waters flow,
And roll in mazy pride along the meads below.

* Sir John and Lady Miller set on foot, and have been the principal means of continuing, a NOBLE CHARITY, supported by voluntary subscriptions, by which some thousands of poor persons have been rendered comfortable and happy. An example worthy of imitation!

ENQUIRY

ENQUIRY CONCERNING HAPPINESS.

“ Fix’d to no spot is happiness sincere.”

POPE.

IT has been a query among casuists,—Whether the man who possesses most of this world’s goods and honours be happier than he who is destitute of every thing but the bare necessities of life. The difficulty of determining this point with certainty will be evident, if we reflect that no man can be in both these situations at the same time; and that present evils, of whatever kind, make stronger impressions than those which are past. Hence the man, who sinks from affluence and eminence to poverty and obscurity, compares his past pleasures with his present distress, without considering the evil and anxiety which he secretly felt in the days of his prosperity. The courtier envies, and sighs for, that contentment which he supposes those enjoy who dwell in the vale of humble life; and these, struck with the false glare of pomp and riches, are sometimes apt to covet them, because they see not the secret sorrows

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of the great. Both are dissatisfied with their station; both wish for something unpossessed, and each is seeking for that good which he supposes the other to enjoy.

But although we may not be able to obtain a solution of the query, some instruction and use may arise from investigating it. The internal perceptions, and predominant passions of men are better discovered by carefully attending to their actions than by their words. The refined notions of the Speculatist and the Philosopher please themselves and their readers well enough in the closet, but are seldom realized in active life. Of all the characters which novelists have drawn, scarce any are truly copied from nature. The traits of *real* character are so fine and evanescent, that the pencil even of genius itself cannot often catch them "living as they rise."

Most people frequently depart from their own plans; they form resolutions, and immediately break them. A "warm passion overleaps a cold decree." We condemn what we too often practise; approve rules of action to which we seldom conform, and are at different times as opposite to ourselves as we are one to another.

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All this proceeds from the desire of something to which we have affixed the ideas of happiness.

The microcosm has innumerable jarring interests as well as the macrocosm. Custom, like the insidious usurper of a conquered kingdom, is first a suppliant, then intrudes as a guest. Having obtained admittance, it solicits our acceptance of its services, and at length commands ours, and rules as a despotic governor. A desire to increase wealth, power, or honour, is in most men the *primum mobile* that sets the system in motion. Every advance they make towards the object desired increases their ardour. The nearer they approach to any distant good, be it real or imaginary, the stronger do they feel the power of its attraction. And, as a man placed between two distant objects cannot arrive at the one without receding from the other, in proportion as the mind fixes its desires on one thing, its opposite will be disregarded, sometimes with a degree of aversion. The man who delights in wealth dreads nothing so much as poverty: Of all the evils beneath the sun, none wears so terrific an aspect in the eye of *Gripos*. He makes real pain a pleasure in striving to gain money; but the fear of losing it is greater than the happiness he enjoys in the possession

sion of it. The man whose desires terminate in power knows no fear so great as that of becoming subject to the controul of others. Alexander, with all his boasted honour, was a slave to the fear of losing what he had conquered. He who treads the craggy path to Fame, and makes it his summum bonum, is constantly on the rack lest a rival should snatch the laurel from his brows;—lest superior merit should push him from the pinnacle whereon he stands; and he suffers more in striving to preserve his imagined superiority, than he enjoys in possessing it.

It is a truth verified both by ancient and modern experience, that the possession of wealth, power, and worldly honours, instead of satisfying, generally increases the desire of them. This is evident to all but the parties themselves, yet *they* seem ignorant of it. The rich miser will join with you in exclaiming against covetousness. If you ask, why he still strives to accumulate wealth, he will declare that he only wants to acquire a *sufficiency*. But what *is* a sufficiency? A term not easily defined. If we advert to the miser's *practical* explanation, it will be, *a little more than he has got*. Attend him another year; his fortune is then perhaps nearly doubled; the reply is still the same,

same, *a little more than he has got*; and so on, to the period of a life worn out and rendered wearisome by accumulating that which age may worship, but cannot enjoy. Happiness is the object of his pursuit: he sees, or thinks he sees, her seated on a bag of ten thousand pounds. With much labour and diligence he gets possession of the bag, but behold, the Goddess of his idolatry has left it. She is now stationed at a further distance, on a bag which contains twenty thousand. He still follows her, and with increasing ardour; he gains possession of that bag: she still eludes his grasp; flies before him, and keeps her distance. But as age increases, the passage to her temple is more and more obstructed by a croud of meagre phantoms called *Fears*, which continually hover about the path of the pursuer. These weaken his activity though not his ardour, till having crept on awhile, with tottering steps, towards that prize which he resolves shall terminate his endeavours, suddenly, the grave opens before him—Death, disdaining a bribe, gives him a push; he sinks, and falls, and is seen of men no more.

The case is nearly similar in men's pursuit of power and honour; they are in themselves ideal, and lie in a little space. The whole aggregate of them,

them, which a subdued world resigned to Alexander, was insufficient to satisfy the cravings of his vast ambition. This extensive region of earth and sea was too scanty: he lamented the smallness of its dimensions, and wept because there were no other worlds within his reach to conquer. Thus, from the cravings of ambition, all the pageantry of state that he possessed was but the gilded mask of inward sorrow.

In all exaltation there is danger. The arrows of mischief shot from the bow of envy, are aimed at those who fill the most conspicuous stations. The proudly tow'ring oak is often shattered by the withen bolt, while the humble shrubs at its foot escape the fury of the storm.

Shall we then ask, can riches, powers, or honours, render men happy? the question will be needless. All these have been tried; have been weighed in the balance, and found lighter than vanity. Could these have conferred happiness, men who possessed the greatest share of them would have been most happy and contented. For what is happiness but that state of content wherein desire and hope are terminated in possession and certainty? Hence it is that compleat happiness cannot

cannot be found on earth; for, in this state of existence, desire and hope are inseparable from us. They are, however, passions which ought ever to be bounded by reason, and directed to proper objects by wisdom. Were they thus governed, much of the disquietude we complain of would cease.

If we descend to humbler life, we shall find that poverty, unless in the extreme, is not so dreadful as the pencil of fear has drawn it. The rich are subject to cares and anxiety which never disturb the poor man's slumbers. Clodio may be happier in his clay-built cot, with his wife and prattling children about him, and enjoy his little fire, and his brown loaf and turnips, with greater content than Glorioso in all the pomp of state, the parade of power, and with the luxury of twenty covers on his table. If Clodio has no wealth, he feels not the care and anxiety that attends it. If deprived of the delicacies which wealth and luxury furnish, his taste is not vitiated by them, and he is free from the baneful effects of intemperance. He feels that health and vigour which the pampered epicure is a stranger to; and having little to lose, is free from the tyranny

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of fear: and if he is but diligent and honest, he enjoys that contentment of mind, which Glorioso seeks for in vain.

Were compleat happiness attainable in this world, we should reap no advantage in being removed to a better. And therefore it has pleased Infinite Wisdom so to constitute us, and the world we inhabit, that *we* are no more capable of complete enjoyment therein, than *that* is of affording it. To such as are convinced of this truth, how vain the pursuit after large possessions! Every acquisition brings its peculiar cares, and care is often the parent of sorrow. While we are striving to obtain any distant good, the pleasure of hope is allayed by the fear of disappointment. No sooner do we possess, than anxiety takes place, lest the object we have gained should be taken from us.

Thus, between hope, fear, and anxiety, we lose much of that happiness, which, were these passions properly moderated, we might enjoy.

The wise of all ages have considered themselves rather as sojourners in, than possessors of, this world;

world; which, although not replete with a sufficient degree of felicity to become the place of our rest, is furnished with all necessary accommodations for us in our journey through it.

“ Enough has Heav’n indulg’d of joy below,
“ To tempt our tarriance in this lov’d retreat;
“ Enough has Heav’n ordain’d of useful woe,
“ To make us languish for an happier seat.”

SCOTT’S ELEGIES.

ON THE
COMPLAINTS OF MANKIND.

THAT human life is subject to various kinds of disquietude, is a truth confirmed by universal experience.

Pain is coeval with our birth, attends us through every stage of life, and, at seasons, visits the habitations of all men. Trouble and disappointment form the shades in life's diversified scenery. Hence human misery has by some gloomy writers been made the standing topic of mournful complaint: they have warbled forth the strains of lamentation, and mused on the sorrows of others, till they became themselves unhappy. But notwithstanding much declamation has been employed to make men believe they are very miserable, a little observation will convince us, that many of these complaints are irrational, and spring only from a discontented mind.

The dispensations of Divine Providence are all inherently and immutably good. He hath established

blished them in consummate wisdom, and they are regulated by that benevolence which shines over all his works. The merciful Author of our Being has not placed us in a situation so wretched as some melancholy writers have pretended. He has, indeed, for wise purposes, permitted afflictions of various kinds to assail us; but let it be remembered, that we are blessed with powers, which, if properly exerted, will often repel, and still oftener alleviate them.

In a former essay on the miseries of human life, I have remarked, that its evils are generally increased by our own imprudence, or for want of resisting them with a philosophic and christian fortitude. It is my present business to shew that many evils, of which people complain, are merely ideal. We often brood over small sorrows with an unmanly weakness; and increase their stream by our unavailing tears. This is sometimes the case when real afflictions befall us; but, as if these were not enough to give us sufficient disquietude, we create to ourselves imaginary troubles, which we deplore with all the folly and imbecility of childhood. The infant in leading-strings cries when his coral or rattle is taken from him: the infant of a larger growth becomes pensive and
unhappy

unhappy when deprived of things equally insignificant.

Florio was born to a genteel independant fortune. Being bred up with tendernefs, his desires increafed with his years; and, having been implicitly obeyed, he became impatient of the leaft contradiction. Indulged in every wifh by the fervants of his father, he contracted a difpofition incapable of brooking difappointment. This was the ftate of his mind, when deprived of an affectionate parent, and left, too early left, to direct his own conduct. He became poffeffed of a fortune which enabled him to live elegantly, and to relieve the wants of his indigent neighbours. He had a conftitution happily formed, and which a commendable temperance had fecured from the attacks of difeafe. He married—was happy in his conjugal connection, and faw his *olive-branches* rife in a pleafing fucceffion around his table.

But with thefe, and many other bleffings, Florio is ftill difcontented. His neighbour has an eftate lying contiguous, the poffeffion of which would render his own fomewhat more complete; but, alas! it cannot be purchafed. Hence Florio is fretful and uneasy, becaufe he cannot obtain it.

He

He lately speculated in an article of merchandize, with hopes of gaining large profits on the expected declaration of a war with a foreign power. That expectation being now over, he is (although no loser) disappointed of the promised addition to his wealth; and having looked on the calculated profit as certain, the loss of that chagrines him as much as though he had really lost a considerable part of his real estate.

In Autumn he planted some large clumps in his pleasure-ground with a variety of evergreens, which were killed by the severity of the winter; and the loss of these makes him so peevish and uneasy that he now seldom visits the otherwise delightful plantation. He has also been unsuccessful in attempting to bring his tulips and auriculas to greater perfection than his neighbours; and this has given him a distaste for the productions of Flora.

He was lately at an auction where some valuable paintings and fine old china were put up to sale. A piece done by Correggio, in his best manner, caught Florio's attention, and he determined to purchase it, just then recollecting that this piece would complete his gallery. As it was going for
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the third and last time he was presented with a note from his steward; while he was giving a verbal reply, the hammer suddenly fell, and it became the property of a gentleman whose collection was the object of his envy, because it exceeded his own. A fine Mandarin he indeed bought at a high price; but his servant, in carrying it home, fell down, and, behold! the admired bauble was shivered to atoms.

“The shining fragments glitter’d on the ground.”

These little misfortunes have given him a distaste for auctions, and he declares a confederacy was entered into to deprive him of his painting, and break his china. Hence, like Pope’s antiquarian, he

“Sighs for an *Otho*, and neglects his bride.”

Thus Florio magnifies trifles into real miseries, and is more unhappy, with all his affluence, than the meanest of his tenants. His disposition is soured by his own imprudence; and, instead of being thankful for the numerous blessings he might enjoy, is repining because it is not in his power to gratify every wish, and prevent some little disagreeable incidents, which are the common lot of humanity.

Zephyllinda

Zephylinda is young, rich, and beautiful as the Houris. She is the darling of her parents: All her friends are candidates for her esteem: Yet Zephylinda is not happy. What is the cause? Her *voice* is not quite so clear and strong as that of Seraphina. This accomplishment she thinks the most valuable that her sex can exhibit; and because she does not possess it, considers the want of it as an irreparable loss. Seraphina is therefore the object of her envy. The sight of her produces the vapours. The bare mention of her name, and especially of her musical powers, causes paleness to cover the cheeks of Zephylinda: she interprets it as a kind of insult, and retires in confusion. The maid had by accident killed her favourite parroquet: she was for a week inconsolable, and constantly, like Niobe, in tears. She railed incessantly against the carelessness of servants, and persecutions of ill fortune. She bought a flowered lustring of the newest pattern, and anticipated the pleasure of being admired for the elegance of her taste in silks; but on her first appearance in it at church, she was eclipsed by Melinda, who had one of the same figure, with still newer trimming. This spoiled her devotion and temper. She was indeed serious, but disappointment, and not piety, had spread the melancholy

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over

over her features. It was in vain that the preacher recommended contentment and humility to his audience. The pleasing ideas formed of exciting general admiration took their flight when she found another must share it with her. She returned home peevish, laid aside the now hated negligee, kicked her lap-dog, scolded her Abigail, shut herself up in her dressing-room, and refused to be comforted. Her uneasiness occasioned a slight indisposition; she passed a sleepless night in accusations of Providence, and in repining against that hand which had shed numerous blessings around her, and placed her in the midst of plenty and ease, and with every means of real happiness in her power.

If we step into the walks of literature, the same folly prevails, and produces many imaginary evils. Here indeed, we might expect it should be excluded, but we are deceived. Men whose minds are enriched with science, who can think and reason with precision, and draw just consequences from the established rules and principles of nature, morality, and religion, are however far less excusable than others, when they thus become their own tormentors.

Philo

Philo had with much study and application written an Epic poem, in which he thought the powers of fine description, moral sentiment, the unities of time and place, and the harmony of numbers, were blended. The work was sent to the press. He corrected the proofs with the true spirit of a minor critic. Not a single iota escaped him. He anticipated the praises of the learned, and the admiration of the present and succeeding ages; and (in a poet's stile) pronounced the work immortal. He published with eagerness; and with the most anxious solicitude enquired every morning of his bookseller how it sold. He calculated both profit and fame; but having made an error in the beginning of the process, the product was false. Disappointment began to stare him in the face—the Critics attack him on every quarter—they expose his secret faults—he is satirised without mercy by his brethren of the quill, and is a loser by the publication. To complete his misfortune; in a few weeks he sees his immortal poem

“Befringe the rails of Bedlam and Soho;”

and has more than once been served with the sheets *gratis* as enclosures for his snuff and his coffee.

Hence Philo perpetually accuses the world of wanting judgment; complains of the slights genius receives at the hands of ignorance, the disregard that merit finds from an ungrateful public, and wisely determines never more to confer his favours upon them. He is unhappy, because the expected laurels of fame bloom not on his temples; and, deprived of this imaginary good, he is peevish, and resigns himself a prey to discontent and melancholy.

From these, and many similar instances which might be adduced, we find that much of the unhappiness complained of is either imaginary, or in itself very trifling. Innumerable blessings still fall to the lot of man. However gloomy the prospect which the pencil of melancholy has drawn of human life, it is still replete with much real happiness. If clouds and darkness sometimes overspread our hemisphere, there are many bright intervals, wherein the radiations of light cheer us with their influence.

But those, who, with a fullen kind of pride, affect to deepen the shades in the picture of human life, and are continually musing on imaginary, and magnifying real evils, would be unhappy

happy were they placed in a terrestrial paradise; nay, heaven itself would not afford them complete happiness. The root of their disquietude being in themselves, whilst that remains alive, its branches will spring up and expand, in the most perfect state of enjoyment.

All the blessings we receive are unmerited — they are the free gifts and goodness of Him, who “afflicts not willingly the children of men.” And therefore, the best means of proving ourselves truly wise, is to shew our gratitude by a chearful disposition, and contented mind. This is the most acceptable offering we can make for the numerous blessings we enjoy, and best demonstrates our humble acquiescence in the respective allotments wherein Divine Providence hath placed us.

ON THE
RIDICULOUSNESS OF AVARITIOUS CHARACTERS:

“ I give and I devise” (old Euclio said,
“ And sigh’d) “ my lands and tenements to Ned.”
“ Your money, fir? “ My money, fir! What all?
“ Why if I must—(then wept)—I give it Paul.”
“ The Manor, fir? “ The Manor! hold, (he cry’d)
“ Not that—I cannot part with that”—and dy’d,”

POPE’S EPISTLES.

IN a former essay, I considered avarice as a passion highly prejudicial to human happiness in this life, and totally incompatible with our duty as reasonable and accountable beings. It may perhaps not be disagreeable to some of my readers, if I resume the subject, and treat it in a somewhat different manner.

Among the innumerable deviations from the rule of right, which mankind are making, some are as proper subjects for satire and ridicule, as others are for serious admonition and reproof. To avarice, indeed, both may be properly applied; but there

there is something so truly ridiculous in the character of your *genuine misers*, that it is difficult to restrain our risibility, when we see and examine the absurdity of their conduct.

Avarice and prodigality are two opposite evils, which I propose to treat of in the course of this work, for the good of my countrymen and fellow-citizens of the world. These are evils which I have a right to expose, because neither of them will be numbered in the catalogue of my sins. I have too much pride (if you please) to be a miser; and too little money to be extravagant. I am however content with the portion of this world's goods, which the Great Giver of all has dispensed to me; and at the same time prize it too highly to squander it away with thoughtless profusion. Placed above want, and below envy, I pity the objects of both, although upon different principles. But let me recollect myself, and not fill half my sheet with preface, as some of your essayists do, till they quite forget the subject matter.

KNOW THEN, (as saith the Congress) that my present observations will be confined to avarice. Let not old Gripus start when he reads this, and think I am going to draw his character; or tell
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the world, that, although he possesses more than 500l. per annum in *real*, he gives a poor barber a halfpenny a number for reading the Family Expositor, rather than be at the expence of buying it: No, no, he need not fear it: he is past cure, and therefore beneath my notice: I will not add to his sufferings: he feels enough already, in the fears that alarm him on the prospect of being removed to that country where rent-rolls and title-deeds are of no value. He has my contempt, and here I leave him.

The man who is a slave to avarice, is not only an unprofitable member of civil society, but a despicable being. It is very difficult to trace his origin: neither God nor Nature formed him. Were I a disciple of Epicurus, I should suppose his soul to have been moulded at random by the fortuitous combination of the dregs of that metal which he most adores. An odd origin, you will say: I grant it, and will give up the point when a better can be found. A miser loves money, as we should love virtue, *in the abstract*; and not merely for the means it affords of procuring happiness. Had Lord Shaftesbury applied his principle of love in the abstract to wealth, he would have never wanted disciples. The comforts of
a miser

a miser are all imaginary, his sorrows real. He knows no pleasure but in the barren contemplation of wealth which he never enjoys. It is the barometer of his pleasures and of his misery. If he makes a bad debt, he is more unhappy by the loss of it than the peasant who sends his only shilling to the baker for bread to divide among seven or eight hungry children. The miseries of those who are ready to perish affect not him: his ear is deaf to the pleadings of want. His feelings are confined wholly to himself; and yet he dare not employ his money to render even *his own life* comfortable.

If you advise him to be charitable, he shrugs up his shoulders, and tells you, that "Charity should begin at home"—quotes, with a cunning leer, the proverb of the ant, and laughs at some, whose too generous bounty to others has exceeded their incomes, and reduced their fortunes; thanks God for what he has, and declares his resolution to manifest his gratitude—by *keeping it*.

History has furnished us with divers accounts of these *living dead men* in former times, and handed their names and characters down to suc-

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ceeding

ceeding ages to be hissed at and despised by the wife, the generous, and the worthy.

Athenæus mentions one who swallowed many pieces of gold when he was dying, and sewed up the rest in a garment, which he strictly ordered should be buried with him. No doubt but so wise an order was *strictly* complied with!

Valere the Great tells us of another, who in this line appears to have had more cunning than fell to the share of all the seven wise men of Greece: he was in the city of Cassaline when it was besieged by Hannibal, and heroically preferred the hope of gain to life itself; for having caught a rat when famine raged in the city, he rather chose to sell it for 200 Roman denarii, than to satisfy his excessive hunger, of which, when he had taken the money, he immediately died. This was a master-stroke of avarice indeed! and what perhaps few moderns can equal for want of opportunity.

Jovian Pontan tells a very good story of a lord named *Agelot*, who accustomed himself every night, after the grooms had given his horses their constant feeding, to go down into the stable, by a trap-door,

trap-door, alone and without light, to rob them of their corn, and convey it to the granary, of which he always kept the key. His Lordship continued this practice so long, that he was at length taken notice of by one of his grooms, who watched his motions, surpris'd him in the fact, and, without seeming to know who he was, gave him an excellent and hearty supper with an oak sapling.

The present times, and my own observation, have furnished me with divers instances of the same contemptible disposition. I once knew a rich tradesman of this cast who had arrived to very great proficiency in this *saving* knowledge, and often exemplified it in his practice. If he was to dine with a friend, he would neither breakfast before, nor sup after it. He made both extremes meet in the middle. Being once at Stirbitch fair on business, he contrived a clever scheme to get a breakfast for a halfpenny. Having bought a roll of a baker's boy, he went into the booths of the cheesemongers, under a pretence of wanting to buy cheese; here he tasted one, and another, and another, till he had finished his roll; and then, objecting to the price, told the chapmen he could not afford to buy

any at that rate, and flinked off exulting in his own œconomy.

But the highest instance of this kind I ever heard of, was that of a *clever fellow* in his way, at Lincoln. This genius, having found means to cheat almost every person he dealt with, and not daring for the sake of his neck to rob openly on the highway, at length, with much study and application, formed a scheme to cheat and rob himself; and for a long time, practised the art of picking pockets on a piece of wood, which he had set upright in his chamber, and dressed up in his own old cloaths, merely to enable himself to take money out of his own pocket without perceiving it. O tempora! O mores!

These are some of the refinements to which this branch of science has been brought. To what greater lengths they may still be carried, it is not easy to determine. This passion strikes as deep, and spreads as wide, as any that governs the human mind. We generally see more consistency of character in misers than in any other class of men. Others deviate frequently from their own principles, and seek pleasure in the charms of variety; but the avaricious man, true as the needle

to

to the pole, is never guilty of wandering a moment from *his* proper center. Although the object of continual reproach or ridicule among the rest of mankind, he is proof against the shafts of wit, the admonitions of virtue, and the arguments of reason and common sense; and with all the constancy of a martyr in the noblest cause, gives up every pleasure, and suffers every species of inconvenience, to qualify himself to die a fool, and be the object of just contempt, as long as his name is remembered.

I shall conclude this essay with a smart epitaph on a miser, which I lately met with in some miscellaneous publication; and which seems properly adapted to the subject.

“ Here lies Gripus, in his grave,
“ Who, when alive, nought *gratis* gave;
“ And even grumbles now he’s dead
“ That you these lines have *gratis* read.”

ODE.

ODE TO MELANCHOLY.

COME, MELANCHOLY, musing maid,
 Who seek'st the thick sequester'd shade,
 Where solitude erects her silent throne;
 Or wild umbrageous bow'r,
 Or ivy-mantled tow'r,
 With bats swift-wheeling round its shatter'd sides:
 Where croaks the raven; where the owl resides,
 And through the still night pours
 Her plaintive moan.

Where ruins, scatter'd round,
 And crumbling fragments, strew the ground,
 Watching the glow-worms paly ray,
 Or meteors shooting through th' ærial way,
 From converse with mankind
 Thou seekest to retire:
 Thou, who, with dishevell'd hair,
 Sitt'st, musing, on a rugged stone,
 With fixed eye, and brow severe,
 Where the gurgling waters run,
 Inspire the song:
 To thee belong
 The sad, yet soothing strains, that wake
 The mournful lyre.

Slow

ODE TO MELANCHOLY.

111

Slow and solemn be the sound,
While the strings my fingers sweep;
Let the pendent rocks around
With trickling waters weep;
And eccho tell my rising sighs
O'er the wild margin of the foaming deep.

Sometimes, methinks, I see thee lie reclin'd
Beneath the baneful yew-tree's shade;
With silent sorrow brooding o'er thy mind;
Sad, by mournful musing, made;
And, while thy pale cheek rests upon thy hand,
The crystal drops, soft trickling from thine eyes,
Descend and strew with pearl the barren strand,
While ev'ry hollow breeze
Comes loaded with thy sighs.

No more the gay, the festive throng,
The mazy dance, the sprightly song,
Softly warbling, charm thine ear;
Music swells the notes in vain:
Pleasure, with her sportive train,
Scarce can keep thee from despair.

For thee, in vain, sweet spring awakes the flow'rs;
In vain gay summer shines in vary'd dyes,
Or autumn sheds her fruits in golden show'rs:
To thee each beauteous scene no joy supplies.

Far

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ODE TO MELANCHOLY.

Far from these, to dreary scenes,
 Lonely haunts, or gloomy shade,
 'Mongst the mournful evergreens,
 Thou retir'st and hid'st thy head.

The rifted rock, the column's shatter'd brows,
 The blasted oak by Jove's dread bolt deform'd,
 The crumbling tow'r where clasping ivy grows,
 The tottering battlements which war has storm'd,
 With pensive pleasure feed thine eyes,
 And lull thy woes with fancy'd ease,
 While the pale moon, behind a broken cloud,
 A momentary gleam supplies.

Sometimes, where sepulchral stones
 Proclaim the spoils of Death's all-conqu'ring hand,
 And o'er the flow-corroding bones
 Their name and age in frail memorial stand
 A few quick-circling years,
 Thou sitt'st, and, poring o'er the tale,
 Becom'st thyself a monument in tears.
 There, beneath the vaulted skies,
 With pallid looks and downcast eyes,
 While the chilling damps arise,
 (Peace a stranger to thy breast,
 Joyless, pensive, and distressed,
 (The bleak winds beating on thy naked head,
 And sporting with thy hair,)
 Thou seest around thin shades arise,
 And sheeted ghosts and spectres drear,

Glide

ODE TO MELANCHOLY. 113

Glide hideous with averted eyes,
Shoot up in lambent flame, and tow'r along the skies.

Then hollow groans thine ear invade,
Whose murmurs, echoing through the shade,
Disturb the deep serene :
The moon retires behind a cloud ;
Night puts on her darkest shroud ;
And horror clothes the scene.

Now with silent steps and slow,
Inly pining with thy woe,
To thy solitary cell,
Where thou ever lov'st to dwell,
Thou, retreating with a sigh,
Seek'st, but in vain, to close thy ever-wakeful eye.

Around thy couch, the family of Spleen,
With aspect wan, and ghastly mien,
(Ideal shapes, in terror clad) arise ;
And Discontent, with baneful wing,
Of ev'ry joy pollutes the spring,
And spreads a dark veil o'er the brightest skies.

Not all the blifs that Eden could bestow
Can light up sunshine in thy pensive breast :
Fix'd are thy sorrows ; rooted is thy woe :
Nought, nought on earth, can sooth thy soul to rest.

THE RASHNESS OF CENSURING THE LAWS OF CREATION.

“ And who but *wishes* to invert the Laws
“ Of Order—*sins* against th’ Eternal Cause.”

POPE.

IT has been the employment of some discontented minds, to disturb the peace of others by finding fault with the laws by which Providence supports and governs the world.

They deplore the decline of summer with un-availing lamentation, and affect to feel a kind of horror at the approach of dull days and wintry blasts, of long nights, and leafless groves. Some have vainly endeavoured to prove the constitution of nature imperfect from the alternate change of seasons, and from the constant succession of cold and heat, sterility and fruitfulness, in all the habitable parts of the earth. They have been presumptuous enough to assert, that the inconveniences arising from the annual revolution of the seasons

seasons would be remedied by a change in the order of our system; and that the presence of a perpetual spring would constitute a scene of greater beauty and happiness than we now enjoy. Thus have they shewn forth the folly of their own minds, and endeavoured to interrupt the tranquility of others, by vain murmurings, originating in discontent, and ending in impiety.

From ignorance of their own frame, and of the nature and powers of the human mind, arises this disposition. They know not the manner in which the soul is affected by the body, or the body by the elements that surround it: nor do they form any just idea of the various relations that subsist between the various ranks of being in the universe, or of the secret communication the one has with the other.

To trace the frame and constitution of human nature, from first principles to visible effects, is a task too arduous for the most acute philosopher. But a little attention to the subject will shew us that much of the pleasure we enjoy is produced by the combinations of variety; and a constant succession of objects, either new in themselves, or presented to us under different arrangements,

and new modifications. These form the most enlivening part of nature's animated scenery, and best exhibit the excellence and beauty of her works. By exciting a constant succession of new ideas, they accelerate the flight of that time which would otherwise appear tedious. By keeping the faculties in employment, their vigour is preserved, and the mind is kept from sinking into the languor of inactivity. From the hope and expectation of joys yet unexperienced, arise the desire of life, and the efforts to preserve it. As every day brings forth something new to us, we view its approach with pleasure. But, were the present state of nature one undistinguished uniform assemblage of the same objects, these hopes and pleasures could not exist. The journey of life, short as it is, would then become tedious, and present no other prospect than that of a dull unmeaning void.

From ignorance springs the pride of little minds. They presume to find fault with the universal plan, although so small a part of it lies within the limits of their comprehension. What low and groveling sentiments must those entertain of Deity, who have the folly and presumption thus to arraign that wisdom which established

blished and preserves the beautiful order and variety that continually shine forth in every part of his works!

The impiety of such conduct is no less evident than its folly, when we reflect on our own blindness and weakness, the state of dependancy in which we are placed, and the duties we owe to the Great Author and Source of all. He who is perfect in wisdom, as well as power, has established those laws, by which every change in the elements, and revolution of the seasons, take place. It is by his appointment that nature walks her beauteous round, and constantly performs her stated operations. To suppose, then, that the laws of his Providence are defective, or that finite beings can amend them, betrays such a degree of impious folly, as we should think it impossible for man to arrive at, did not his own tongue proclaim it. The various vicissitudes of created things excite in us the highest sensations of pleasure as well as pain; and if they sometimes so elevate the billows as to cause a momentary tempest in the ocean of life, they also prevent the still worse consequence of its becoming noxious by stagnation.

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The human mind is formed for activity and duration. It cannot, even now, be happy in the torpor of indolent repose: and perhaps, as it rises through the various degrees of perfection, and stages of existence, its activity may for ever increase. The intellectual capacities of man grasp at something beyond the limits of this world; his hopes extend to other regions of existence. The mind cannot, therefore, long dwell with pleasure on a single object or a single theme; but panting after new discoveries in knowledge, is continually in search of a succession numerous as its desires, and endless in their variety. To satisfy these desires, in the present state of being, the boundless variety of nature, and the constant succession of day and night, of summer and winter, of spring time and of harvest, seem to have been appointed. These changes constitute much of our sensitive happiness, and furnish the means of exercising our intellectual powers with improvement and delight. Without this alternate change we should soon feel the languor of satiety become intolerable, and be deprived of a great part of that happiness we now enjoy.

It would be a very proper consideration for those discontented beings, whom God himself cannot

cannot please, and whose vain conceit prompts them to "call imperfection what they fancy "such," would they reflect whether the remedy they propose, could remove the supposed inconvenience.

It is generally thought, that every successive season has its peculiar advantages, and affords its peculiar pleasures: and the language of wisdom is, that all unitedly conspire to form the grand aggregate of beauty and felicity enjoyed by sensible and virtuous minds in the present state of being. Addison has remarked, with equal piety and truth, that "the creation is a perpetual feast "to the mind of a good man." To the truth of this position every good man will assent, not only from its reasonableness, but from the concurring testimony of his own experience.

Whenever he steps aside from the scenes of business and of folly, and contemplates the objects that surround him in their native beauty and order, an endless field of entertainment lies open before him. The vales are cloathed with verdure, and enamelled with flowers of a thousand forms and hues: The hills crowned with woods, or, frowning with a wild magnificence, sublimely rise
around

around him. He sees innumerable tribes of beings beautiful in their order, and happy in their sphere. His ears are saluted with the warbling of birds, the waving of the foliage, and the gurgling of waters. Surrounded thus with beauty, and with harmony, can he fail to partake of the general joy, or hesitate to join in the general tribute of praise to the Great and Glorious Author of his being? No, surely. Insensible indeed must that mind be, who does not feel itself impelled, by sensations of gratitude and joy, to join the general chorus, and say with Milton,

“ These are thy glorious works, Parent of good !

“ Almighty ! thine this universal frame

“ Thus wondrous fair ; —

Every season affords its peculiar pleasures. If *Spring*, arrayed in the gaiety of youth and beauty affects us with the most lively sensations, and suggests the most enlivening hopes, the *Summer* animates and gives them additional maturity and vigour. The riches and the mildness of *Autumn* afford pleasures scarcely inferior to the gayer seasons ; while *Winter* furnishes the united satisfaction arising from recollection, and of hope, from reflection and anticipation.

Even

Even *Winter* itself, which discontent has represented as a season of dreary wretchedness, and barren of all that is pleasing, is replete with real advantages and peculiar beauties. The objects it presents are striking, and afford pleasure to every mind disposed to be pleased with the works of its creator. Its effects on us are equally beneficial with those of milder seasons. The objects peculiar to that period of the year are no less beautiful in the eye of a Philosopher, than the gaiety of Spring and the luxuriance of Summer. By the frosts and snow the air is purified from those noxious particles and vapours which endanger health; and the earth is impregnated with a sufficient quantity of saline and nitrous matter, to loosen its cohesion, and promote the progress of vegetation. Even the animal system receives the greatest advantage from the return of winter. Languid and enervated by the heat of summer, fatigued with the toils of autumn, the blood and juices circulate too faintly, and the body wants a stimulus to regulate and increase the disordered state, and interrupted motion of its fluids and organs. But by the sharpness and keen activity of winter air, the solids are braced up to their proper tone, the elastic spring of the fibres is increased, and the whole animal œconomy is restored to

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order.

order. Hence perhaps it is that the social and domestic pleasures are relished in an higher degree during winter than in any other season. The mind seems more collected within itself, and is capable of acting with greater vigour than in seasons where its attention is broken and divided among a multiplicity of exterior objects.

Thus it appears that every season, as well as object, is beautiful and useful in its order. To contemplate this order and beauty is a noble and beneficial employment. By pursuing it, we increase our own happiness, and find ample reason to join in the declaration made by the Almighty, when, having surveyed all his wonderful works, he pronounced them *very good*.

REFLECTIONS

REFLECTIONS ON THE SPIRIT AND
ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY.

TO sustain with propriety the title of a christian, is the highest attainment of human beings. We all lay claim to, and shelter ourselves under the profession of, that venerable name; but it is much to be feared, that too many content themselves with this profession, without seeking to experience the prevalence of its nature in their hearts.

It may perhaps not be an unprofitable employment, to consider wherein christianity consisteth; and how far the professors of it in general are justified in assuming that sacred character. This I shall endeavour to do, first, by shewing what christianity *is not*, and secondly, what *it is*.

Christianity has, by many of its professors, been supposed to consist principally in the belief of Christ, in the Scriptures, and an outward compliance with those public institutions which com-

pose the liturgy of the Church of England, Those who subscribe their assent to what is recorded in the New Testament, concerning the birth, life, miracles, meritorious sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ, look on themselves as thereby entitled to the name of Christians. There are others who to this belief and assent add the performance of those rites and ceremonies, and observance of those institutions, which Christ either practised for the fulfilling of the legal dispensation, or appointed to be observed by his followers till he should come "the second time without sin unto salvation." Thus we find many amongst this stricter sort of professors, who lay a great stress upon these things, and, by their neglect of attending to the moral precepts of Christ, have shewn that they apprehended a belief in, and observance of the former, constituted the whole of christianity: but such cannot in the true sense of the word be called Christians, because they practise not the duties that christianity enjoins. The Apostle Paul, who received his religion from better authority than that of education, or mere tradition, seems to have comprehended the belief of these great truths under the term Faith: "And although I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains,"

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“ tains, and have not Charity, I am nothing.” This faith or knowledge of, or belief in, the great articles of the christian religion, is by him represented as totally unavailable, unless it is accompanied by charity. This divine Charity, or love of GOD, and love to man, contains the essence of christianity. Wherever it resides, it becomes an operative principle in the mind, regulating the affections, and leading men to obey the precepts of the gospel. Without this charity (which ever demonstrates itself by effects corresponding with its nature) christianity is but an empty name: this divine charity, or love of GOD, shed abroad in the heart, is the root, whence springs every truly virtuous action: where this is wanting, there is no true christianity. Those who are guilty of gross immorality, however specious and exact in the observance of outward rites and ceremonies, have in that state no just claim to the christian character.

We daily see men, whose actions give the lye to the professions they make. Whilst they have approached the Deity with their lips, in the observance of outward modes of worship, their hearts have been far from him. These are so far from being Christians, that their form of religion is
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mere mockery, and their very prayers are an abomination to the Lord Almighty.

There are some who wear the mask of religion, the easier to impose on the unwary; the old proverb of being "Saints at Church, and sinners at home," may be applied to these with peculiar propriety. They have indeed a *wisdom*, but not of that kind which is, "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated;" its effects have proved it to be "carnal, sensual, and devilish;" the purposes to which it has been employed, have been the gratifications of sensuality, pride, and avarice; whilst they have been very strenuous in externals, they have neglected to cultivate the more excellent virtues of justice, mercy, benevolence, and that universal charity which "covereth a multitude of sins." Actuated by a bigoted zeal, they have censured all who could not subscribe to every established article of their faith, or opinion, and deemed such unworthy of their communion and friendship, although perhaps unblameable in their morals, and humble sincere worshippers of the Father, through and by the spirit of his Son, manifested in their hearts.

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These censorious zealots, however high in notion, are not entitled to the character of real christians. Like the Jews formerly, they are resting in the performance of rituals, and their language has been, "the Temple of the Lord, "the Temple of the Lord, are these."

It is not being initiated into the church by the instrumentality of water baptism, or partaking in the outward administration of what is called the sacrament, that constitutes us christians. Experience has evinced, that many, who have been very punctual in the observance of these things, have, notwithstanding, been very far from possessing the spirit and essence of christianity. Nevertheless, I am far from discouraging such as think it their duty to practise these things, from the observance of them:—their sincerity will, doubtless, be accepted by that God who looks at the heart; but at the same time, I would endeavour to lead them on to things more excellent; the practice of those virtues which renew the mind, and give a well-grounded hope of that salvation which comes by Jesus Christ.

This leads me, in the second place, to consider what christianity is in its true nature. It is founded

ded in morality, but extends as much further than any moral system prior to it, as its Great Author was superior to any former lawgiver.

To be a Christian is to be a disciple of Christ: "He that will be my disciple, must take up his daily cross and follow me," or, in other words, must live under the influence and dominion of the spirit of Christ in his heart: he must make the precepts of Christ the rule of his actions, and, by the assistance of his grace, do his will and obey his commandments. He must follow him in the way of righteousness, be subject to his cross, and, through the operation of his power, be created anew in the image of God. Christianity is an *inward* work, and must have its progress in the heart. If submitted to, it will rectify our wills, enlighten our understandings, and enable us to walk as becomes the disciples of him, who laid down his life, and became a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. As all sin, of whatever kind, is irreconcilable with the christian doctrine, so christianity includes every virtue and duty from man to the Author of his being.

Therefore, if we would sustain the dignified character of christians with propriety, we must not
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only believe the great truths of the Gospel, but make its precepts the rule of our conduct, and seek after that purity of heart, and holiness of life, which fits us for an inheritance in future glory.

The real christian experiences in himself the root or stamina of that life, by which he is supported, and enabled to persevere in his daily warfare through time to eternity; "for Christ is in us except we be reprobates." He witnesses Christ to be come, agreeable to his promise, "the second time without sin unto salvation," and knows the great end of his coming is to redeem from all iniquity.

He is sensible of the unspeakable condescension of God, in the means of human redemption. This consciousness begets in his mind the sensations of gratitude and love: it excites him to exemplify that love by a sincere obedience to the Divine law, which is now written, not on perishable tables of stone, but on the tablet of the heart: "I will write my law in their hearts, and put my spirit in their inward parts;" this the christian experiences to be verified in himself. Love to God, and good-will to men, will then become the spring of his actions. He will find that the

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whole human race stand in the same relation to the Universal Parent, the God and Father of the spirits of all flesh; who willeth, that all men should come to the knowledge of him, and be saved.

Struck with this unspeakable kindness, he will catch a spark of the celestial flame of divine love, and consider the rest of mankind as his brethren; he sees they were all formed for the same noble purpose, and made capable of enjoying eternal happiness. Hence his love to them will be diffused in a boundless expansion, and display itself in acts of benevolence and charity to all around him.

He will not only feed the hungry, cloath the naked, and visit the sick in their affliction; but watch over their conduct for good, instructing them, both by precept and example, in virtue and religion. He will first be careful to become a good example in his own conduct, and then to exhort, and reprove others for their offences. His charity will cover the weaknesses of human nature; and, even when the commission of crimes calls for his reproof, he will, while he condemns the action, retain love to the offender, and seek his reformation.

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The little differences of opinion, with regard to circumstantials in religion, will not cause him to look shy on his neighbour, or to think him unworthy of his regard. He will not be so narrow in his sentiments, as to think the favour of God is confined to any particular sect, or party, name, society, or class of men.

He is told by the highest authority, that "of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, those who fear God, and work righteousness, shall be accepted of him." All names or distinctions are lost in that universal charity, which glows in the breast of the real christian. He will adopt the saying of Luther, "In whomsoever I see any thing of Christ, him I love." If sincerity of heart, and a well-regulated conduct, be conspicuous, he will not condemn hastily for a diversity in opinions, but regard such as fellow-travellers to the kingdom of God. His love to the Deity, and fear to offend him, will cause great circumspection, and the secret devotion of a pure heart will ascend in mental worship to him who wants not the medium of vocal sounds to convey the oblation of gratitude and praise.

Thus christianity is a work of the heart, rather than the head; it must have its beginning, progress, and completion, there. It consists in obedience to the commands of Christ, springing from love to God, and an humbling sense of our insufficiency, without his assistance to do his will, and become heirs of his kingdom.

These are no enthusiastic reveries, or cunningly devised fables; they are consistent with the doctrine of Christ himself, and will stand the test of an impartial scrutiny. Hence it behoves every one, who calls himself a christian, to look well to the foundation on which he stands: if he builds on the sandy basis of empty speculation, traditionary faith, mere morality, or an imputative righteousness, his fabric will not abide the day of trial. These are the four capital shoals on which it is to be feared numbers have made shipwreck of their faith and hope, and in the end laid down in sorrow. But the christian religion, in its genuine purity, exhibits a more sure foundation, on which, whosoever builds, will find eternal security. Christ is that sacred rock, against which the gates of hell, and all the powers of the adversary, never did, nor ever will prevail.

Immutability

Immutability is written in eternal characters on its basis, and it will sustain the righteous through all the vicissitudes of time, and the endless ages of eternity.

This was the rock on which Abraham, and all the holy Patriarchs, built in ancient days. It was this rock that followed Israel in the wilderness, "and this rock was Christ;" he is the shepherd of the sheep; they know his voice, and follow him, and the voice of a stranger they will not follow.

The duration of life is uncertain, and its business of the highest importance. No time is to be lost; the voice of wisdom is calling aloud for diligence. The hour is hastening when the dream of vanity will be broken up, when every illusion will vanish, when miscarriage cannot be repaired, and repentance will prove vain. Every terrestrial blessing will then cease to afford its wonted comfort; our hopes and fears will be concentrated in one dreadful point, on which is suspended our portion in eternity.

Let us therefore, whilst time remains, carefully improve it in proportion to its importance.

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Let us be Christians in reality as well as name, and not dare to approach the Majesty of Heaven and Earth, with "a lye in our right hand." Although the means be difficult to flesh and blood, the end is attainable by all. And in order to attain this glorious end, it will become us as rational beings, and especially as christians, to reduce to practice that excellent exhortation of the Apostle, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things "are true, honest, just, pure, and lovely, of good "report; if there be any virtue, if there be any "praise, think on these things."

O N P R I D E.

THERE is not, in the whole circle of human passions, one more ridiculous in itself, or unbecoming man, than pride; yet its influence on the human mind seems to be more general than that of any other. In pride the fable of Proteus is realized; and its effects, as pointed out by Æsop in the frog and the ox, are often conspicuous.

As the genius and dispositions of men incline them to a variety of pursuits, pride obtrudes itself under innumerable forms and appearances; in all which it is generally hid from those actuated by it, although very obvious to the rest of mankind. Hence it is that we so frequently hear pride condemned by those who, with respect to some other supposed accomplishment or acquisition, secretly indulge it. Diogenes trampled on what he called the pride of Plato, doubtless under the influence of a more criminal degree of that passion.

Pride,

Pride, when it only displays itself in the little external decorations of dress and furniture, is less dangerous in its nature, less injurious in its effects, than when, settling in the mind, it condemns those follies with a rigid austerity. In the first instance it may properly excite the smile of ridicule; in the latter it deserves reproof, and excites detestation.

In the course of my observation on men and things, I have had frequent opportunities of observing that species of pride to be the most deeply rooted, and dangerous, which manifests itself under the pharisaical form of rigid censorious virtue, and the idea of having arrived at higher religious attainments than other men. The pride exhibited in external dress, &c. proceeds from want of reflection, and may be cured by it. The latter has its origin in the heart, and its language is "stand off, for I am holier than thou." Men of dull saturnine constitutions are often free from most obvious immoralities and extravagance in dress and furniture. For this negative virtue, many are indebted rather to the weakness of their passions, or a want of taste for elegance, than to any innate sense or love of truth and rectitude. Yet these men are generally the most ready
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to accuse others of pride. The indulgence of a little outside finery will, in their eyes, obscure the virtues of the wearer; and cause them to exclaim against him in a spirit of bitterness, while they are themselves destitute of many amiable qualities possessed by the objects of their censure.

The Cynic Philosopher was not the only man who has affected to despise the supposed marks of pride in others with far greater pride in himself. Many preachers, with all the apparent sanctity of anchorites, and shrouded in all the pomp of sacerdotal formality, have, while they exclaimed against pride, secretly exulted in the anticipation of the applause they should gain by proving the desire of it to be unlawful. Thus, while with much severity they combated the obvious excrescences of pride, they have carefully watered its root in their own bosoms. Such is men's blindness to their own imperfections, and such their aptitude to censure in others, what, under a different appearance, they secretly cherish in themselves.

If we carefully examine the spring of our actions, we shall find it to be *Pride* oftener than we are willing to allow. It is a passion that early gains ground, and, although its objects may be

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changed, it is seldom totally eradicated. To this passion more than to the abstract love of rectitude, we may attribute much of that external regularity of conduct, which by common suffrage has obtained the name of virtue. Custom has affixed a stigma on obvious wickedness; and hence it is condemned, even by the wicked, in all but themselves. When the prevalence of passion, rendered strong by improper indulgence, excites to acts of public reproach, injury, or scandal, pride has frequently its share in preventing vicious inclinations from ripening into action, or at least, in concealing them from public notice. On the contrary, the love of reputation (which in some is but a softer name for pride) excites to a conduct which public suffrage has deemed virtuous for the sake of promoting it in the world. Thus, sincerity is sacrificed to pride, and the mask of humility covers secret ambition.

The pride of reputation, and of religious attainments often dazzle the eyes, and influence the conduct of men whom the sight of a little gaiety in dress would ferment into a false zeal against others at least as worthy as themselves. Some are proud of their finery, others of their plainness: both are under the dominion of a passion very unbecoming

becoming rational beings, but with this difference; in the former it evaporates in dress, in the latter it often rankles in the heart.

Public bequests are frequently the effects of this passion. Many, who have passed through life in affluence without feeling one benevolent sentiment for human misery, have, when they could keep their dearly-beloved self no longer, disposed of it in the most ostentatious manner at their death. Hence, many donations to public hospitals, and other gifts, which bear the name of charity, are too often only the fruits of an uncharitable pride, which gives for its own sake, and not from motives of compassion. By acts of this kind men have often established a reputation at their death which they never deserved; and the sacred name of Charity has been affixed to deeds dictated by Pride and Ambition:—Verily, such have their reward.

Pride has frequently been deemed the offspring of ignorance: in general, I allow the pedigree to be just; but it sometimes springs from the acquisition of knowledge. This is evident in the characters and behaviour of some whose lives have been devoted to study, and the attainment of

science. Conscious that they knew more than the common class of mankind, pride, rather than a desire to serve truth and virtue, has led them to display their superior wisdom in becoming public instructors. To this cause we may attribute the laboured pomp of their style; their obvious endeavour to shine, rather than to inform; their impatience of contradiction; and warmth in defending their own opinions, when opposed by those of other men.

An expectation of profit, or of fame, is too often the grand spring of action to authors: it supercedes the more disinterested motive of a desire to elucidate truth, and propagate useful knowledge; and were profit and fame to be withheld, the number of new publications would soon decrease. Whether this would be any real injury to mankind, I am not qualified to determine; but of this I have no doubt, that the endeavouring to weaken men's sense of the obligations of religion and moral virtue, by writings that inflame their passions, or tend to promote principles of libertinism and infidelity, is more injurious to society than the open practice of vice and immorality.

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The love of flattery has its origin in pride, and most men are tinctured with it: when decently offered up, it is generally an acceptable sacrifice, even to those who affect to despise it.

The best means to exterminate pride from the human heart, is diligently to study that excellent science *the knowledge of ourselves*. If we examine our own imperfections, they will exhibit a humiliating prospect. When we reflect how little can be known, confidence will give place to modest doubt and humble enquiry. When we consider how many deviations the best of us are making from the path of unerring rectitude, pride will stand abashed, and all the aspirings of ambition will be laid in the dust. From a consciousness of our own weakness, we shall look with pity on the weaknesses of our brethren, and endeavour to cover them with the veil of celestial charity.

When we reflect on the absolute dependance of our state, and that every thing we enjoy is the free gift of a wise, good, and merciful Being, our minds are impressed with sentiments of humility and gratitude to the Great Author of all that we possess, and we feel a tender affectionate regard to the rest of his creation: and when, under
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a proper sense of our own meanness, we rise to the contemplation of his adorable attributes,—the greatness and glory of his perfections,—instead of exulting in our own little attainments, or condemning the failings of our fellow-creatures with severity, we shall be convinced, that, “unto us
“ belongeth blushing and confusion of face.”

ON THE ABUSE AND MISAPPLICATION OF TIME.

“ Men may live fools, but fools they cannot die.”

WHEN human life becomes the topic of conversation, nothing is more common than to hear people complain of its shortness and uncertainty; and yet the various portions into which it is divided are represented as tedious. Numerous have been the arts employed to accelerate its flight, and hasten the revolution of periods, which once passed can never return. To many who complain that time is short,—that we are here to-day and gone to-morrow,—a week, a day, nay even an hour, seem intolerable, without some amusement to banish thought and reflection.

To a considerate mind, it must appear strange that beings who possess, and boast of faculties and powers of reasoning adapted to their state, should be inattentive to any part of that time, the shortness of which they so frequently deplore. It is
strange,

strange, that, knowing its uncertainty, and that their happiness or unhappiness in a succeeding state of existence will depend on their conduct in the present life, they should want any other incitement to practise its various duties with unremitting diligence.

From the curiosity men usually discover on other occasions, it might reasonably be expected they would be more frequently employed in contemplating that scene which lies beyond the grave. It is, indeed, to many, "an undiscovered country;" but as we must all soon become inhabitants of it, we ought, so far as reason and revelation can guide us, to make it the subject of frequent enquiry and serious meditation. General observation, however, evinces that this is not the case. Little solicitude is discovered about the nature and enjoyments of that state to which we are hourly hastening. Men's views, hopes, and expectations, seem almost wholly centered on what relates merely to this life, and the perishable objects of time and sense, which have no relation to another.

Whence can this inconsistency of conduct arise?
Is it that the natural love of life and its enjoyments,

ments, and the hope of its continuance, banish every consideration of its end? Is it because it is pleasant to behold the sun, and that even the idea of being taken from visible things overspreads the mind with gloom? Is it that the soul "shrinks back and startles at" the dissolution of its connection with the body? With virtuous minds this cannot be the case. With the vicious, the mere sensualist, and those who by considering "too curiously" have reasoned themselves out of the belief of the soul's immortality, it may. Such cannot reflect on their final separation from all that now gives them delight, without feeling a degree of horror. Their prospects are bounded by the narrow horizon of time, and their hopes by its enjoyments. Having no idea of, they have no desire after, that intellectual satisfaction which is suited to the dignity of a rational mind, and the natural proof of its immortality.

To those, who, being strangers to virtue here, have no just conception of the nature of its rewards, eternity must appear a dreary waste; and hence their minds revolt from those boundries which they dread to pass. The language of their practice is, "From the dust we were taken, and

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" unto

“ unto dust we shall return;—let us eat and drink,
“ for to-morrow we die.”

Although such cannot be wholly unconscious, they seem at least regardless, of their immortal descent, and degrade themselves from that rank they were designed to fill in the scale of being. To men of this class, it might reasonably be imagined, time would appear most precious, because they seem not to expect any thing beyond its limits; yet we find none abuse it more, or pay less regard to its flight. But, independent of all future considerations, it appears folly in the extreme for us to lose, by a scene of mere trifling, that which we know to be short in its duration, when, by employing instead of wasting it, we might increase the satisfaction which even temporal blessings afford. A man who thinks little of futurity is still capable of much rational enjoyment in the study of nature's works, and those arts which excite curiosity and embellish life. When such dream away whole evenings over a pack of cards, without a single idea being excited that can either increase knowledge, or give any rational entertainment, we cannot think very highly of their understandings: but when they complain of
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the shortness of life, and the uncertainty of time, we can only smile at their inconsistency and folly. The field of nature is so extensive, and replete with such a beautiful variety of objects capable of affording real entertainment, that no man who justly lays claim to common sense can be justified in letting hours and days slip away in thoughtless inactivity. To contemplate these, to trace effects up to their causes, and observe the wonderful manner in which God's wisdom and providence is displayed on this part of the immense theatre of his works, seem an employment so well adapted to excite pleasure in an intelligent mind, that to neglect it betrays great insensibility.

Yet how frequently do we see, that time is lost instead of being employed either usefully or profitably. Men neglect to improve either their understandings or their hearts. Every trifle diverts their attention from considerations of infinite importance. That great and necessary work, which the most active life can barely accomplish, is frequently postponed to that season when activity is most difficult—the feeble evening of age. And in many others, those faculties and powers of the mind, which were given them to investigate, adore, and imitate the moral perfections of our Creator,

are prostituted to the unworthy purposes of obtaining wealth instead of wisdom, seeking sensual instead of rational pleasures, and the "mere" "whistling of a name," instead of true honour, and virtuous praise.

Thus too many "live fools" in the most emphatical sense of the term, "but fools they can-
"not die." The time is hastening when every illusive phantom will vanish, every mask be stript off, and their folly and deformity will appear. Awakened conscience *will* then be heard. At this season what will riches, honours, pomp, and grandeur, avail? Then "all that now sparkles in the
"eye of hope, or pants in the bosom" of ambition, will lose its power to please. The hours they have trifled away will be recollected with painful regret. The certainty of those truths will then be felt, which in the days of thoughtless festivity they treated as idle chimeras and enthusiastic reveries. The fallacy of their schemes will then be detected, and they will wish their time and talents had been employed in the study of wisdom, and the practice of virtue,

How far the mercy of God may be withheld from such hereafter, let me not presume to determine.

mine. Far be it from me to attempt limiting, even in idea, its glorious extension, or to assign the ministration of eternal punishment on any of my fellow-beings. But is it not great presumption to venture an eternity on so doubtful a cast? Let us ever bear in remembrance, that *Justice* is one of the Divine attributes, and that the incorrigible offender has not, *in that state*, any claim to the Divine favour,

Were we frequently to attend to the flight of time, and consider its end; to examine on what our hope of future bliss is founded, and anticipate that day of discovery and decision which is hastening upon us, it would excite diligence, and weaken our attachment to inferior objects. To a mind conscious of its native dignity and immortality, this employment cannot be either unpleasing or unprofitable. It is the highest proof of wisdom so to act in our present situation, that when removed to another the change may be as happy as it will be lasting. We need not fear that this will diminish our present happiness. The Gracious Being who formed us requires no service at our hands, but what will tend to promote our present good. "Godliness is profitable to all things;" by living in conformity to its rules,
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we escape many evils, and are preserved in virtue and innocence. We enjoy every gratification that can give delight to a reasonable mind. Were mankind generally influenced by this noble principle, how happy would be the state of human society! The voice of discord would be no more heard. The various ranks and classes of men would be connected in the strongest and most pleasing band of union. "Righteousness and peace" would kiss each other," and extend "from the river to the ends of the earth." The present state of existence would be only a happy prelude to one still more exalted and glorious in the realms of eternal day.

However visionary or puritanical these reflections may be deemed by the gay, the inconsiderate, and the licentious, a time is approaching when such will discover and own them to be the language of truth.

When the dream of folly is ended, their life will appear a barren waste, and every pursuit, which terminates with it, unprofitable. But those who have early applied their hearts unto wisdom, and made her precepts the governing rule of action, will possess that substantial treasure
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which can never fail. They will approach the confines of the grave with a hope that is full of immortality, and, in the last "hour of their adversity, be joyful."

It is only in proportion as men wisely and profitably employ the time allotted them in this state of being, that they can review life with satisfaction, when its solemn close approaches. The mind that is conscious of having thus spent its days, feels, in the hour of death, that security and exultation so strongly described by Addison in these inimitable lines:

- "The soul, secur'd in her existence, smiles
- "At the drawn dagger, and defies its point;
- "The stars shall fade away, the sun himself
- "Grow dim with age, and nature sink in years;
- "But thou shalt flourish in immortal youth,
- "Unhurt amidst the war of elements,
- "The wrecks of matter, and the crush of worlds.

ON THE NATURE OF VIRTUE AND TRUE RELIGION.

“ O Virtue, sacred habitant of Heaven!
“ Offspring of Deity; on earth a stranger;
“ Come, and illume our darkness with thy light,
“ And lead us to thy mansion in the skies.”

ANON.

AT a season when the nation is rendered unhappy by the divisions of party influence and animosity; when the contemplation of serious subjects is termed enthusiasm, and the minds of the people are almost wholly engaged either on politics, the pursuit of wealth, or in scenes of folly and dissipation, it will doubtless be deemed unfashionable, and perhaps impertinent, to excite them to the consideration of moral and religious truths.

Yet such is the acknowledged importance of these subjects to rational and immortal beings, that I hope to be held excusable by those few who sustain

sustain with propriety the character of *wise men*, if I endeavour to recal their attention to things which are of the highest moment.

To beings whose existence here is uncertain, whose exit is to be succeeded by an awful decisive judgment, and whose future happiness or misery depend on their present conduct, it cannot be unnecessary frequently to enquire into their own state and circumstance.

The votaries of sensuality, the wittlings of the age, and the sons of Mammon, may now laugh at the serious precepts and wise instructions of reason; but a period will soon arrive, when these will see their folly, and wish, perhaps vainly wish, their past hours had been spent in a manner more consistent with the end and design of their being.

We are taught by the highest authority to believe, that it is the practice of virtue only that can lead to true happiness; and that the neglect of it is ever attended with misery. Hence it becomes equally our interest and our duty to regard its precepts with an attention proportioned to their importance, and to obey its laws in a regular course of upright and religious conduct.

Here, perhaps, some may be ready to ask me what I mean by *Virtue* and *Religion*. The short answer to this question is, that religion and virtue are one; they are unchangeable in all ages, and consist in a practical obedience to the will of God.

The sacred text exhibits a definition of religion which is a certain standard to measure all pretences to it by, and from which no christian can appeal to any other.

“ True religion and undefiled before God and “ the Father, is, to do justly, love mercy, and “ walk humbly with God.” Every pretence to religion, which falls short of this; every article of faith or mode of worship, which lead not to it, are imperfect. The practice of these three comprehensive duties will render men happy here, and the proper objects of superior felicity in a future state of being. The neglect of them naturally introduces disorder and disquietude in the present life, and disqualifies the soul for the enjoyment of celestial happiness.

Permit me, therefore, to consider these duties more particularly. To *do justly* is a precept of natural religion enforced by Divine revelation.

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The necessity of this is so evident, that we see almost every species of unhappiness and misery in common life proceed from the neglect of it. All the calamities of war, and the depopulation of kingdoms, are derived from infringements on the rights of justice. If every man were content in the enjoyment of his own property, and to hold that of his neighbour sacred, we should be free from many inconveniences that now attend us, and this world would be a terrestrial paradise. Every man would then sit under his own vine, and none would make him afraid. But this precept extends still farther. There is a justice due to our Creator, and to ourselves.

The justice due to the Deity may not improperly be denominated *piety*. It consists in humbly manifesting our fervent gratitude to him for the blessings we enjoy. We are furnished with all that our hearts can reasonably desire, and the Divine favours we have received demand from us the sincere tribute of unfeigned thanksgiving and praise.

The justice due to ourselves consisteth in our not abusing what we possess to our own injury. As the body is liable to suffer by every species of

X 2 intemperance,

Intemperance, we ought carefully to guard against it. Intemperance often destroys the body, and always injures it, by depriving it of that happiness it was constructed to enjoy. What is still worse, it disorders the mental frame; and, by debilitating the faculties of the soul, unfits them for the calm enjoyments of study and contemplation.

A mind fettered by intemperance to sensual pleasures, and to the objects which this world affords, cannot extend its views to things most excellent, which furnish the highest mental satisfaction. Therefore, to "do justly" in the full sense of the words is not only to be morally honest; or to watch over, and be careful not to injure our bodies or minds by intemperance and excess; but also to retain a lively sense of incessant gratitude and praise to the Great Author of our being, who hath given us "all things richly" (but not wantonly) "to enjoy."

Equally important is the second precept, "to love mercy." The neglect of this duty has introduced many of the most fatal calamities that embitter life, and filled the habitations of mankind with distress. If all men loved mercy, the horrors of war would for ever cease. The persons

tions and properties of mankind would remain secure from all violence and oppression. Poverty would no longer dwell in the cots of honest industry: the tear would no longer flow from the helpless and destitute. We should no longer "grind the face of the poor" to serve the purposes of pride and ambition. Nature is a rich fund, from which every human want may be easily supplied. That Providence whose goodness is inexpressible, who clothes the lillies, and who heareth the complaints of the inferior orders of living creatures, hath amply provided for the support of all men. But those who *love not mercy* have, by the accumulation of their abundant wealth, often deprived the poor of *their* share in the general bounty. If we *love mercy*, we shall endeavour to lessen their wants, to ease their toils, to lighten their oppression, and to make them joyful in the participation of the good things we enjoy. We shall also abstain from every act of cruelty to the brute creation.

That a "merciful man is merciful to his beast," is a proverbial truth. Such will not abuse or oppress them in their labour, to gratify the irrational purposes of sport, avarice, wantonness, or cruelty.

We

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We ought also to be merciful to *ourselves*, in repressing those sensual passions, which, if indulged without restraint, would tend to the injury of our bodies, and endanger the happiness of our immortal spirits, by disqualifying them for those intellectual enjoyments which are the reward of virtue in time and in eternity.

A steady perseverance in these duties will teach us the third, and excite us to "walk humbly with GOD." An ancient author has observed, that "pride was not made for man," and indeed it is one of the most irrational of all the passions. All that we enjoy, whether of natural accomplishments, outward possessions, or intellectual powers, is the free gift of our Creator. The good things we are favoured with were given for a nobler purpose than to feed our pride, and gratify our ambition. The faculties we possess, and by which we are distinguished from the inferior ranks of being, are every moment at the disposal of Him who gave them. And if we consider, that he can at his own pleasure strip us of all these blessings, and suffer us to feel all the sad and painful variety of human wretchedness, the reflection is surely sufficient to make us humble indeed. Humility is the mind's most excellent adorning.

It

It spreads a veil over every natural imperfection, —it throws an inexpressible grace over every accomplishment and perfection. It renders us truly amiable in the sight of men, and acceptable to the Author of our Being. It is a certain consequence of the knowledge of ourselves, and ever attendant on true wisdom.

When we consider, that all the little arts by which we endeavour to veil our imperfections one from another, are seen through by the eye of Divine Omniscience, it is sufficient to humble the most exalted. When the mind contemplates on Him who is encircled with every adorable attribute, and inconceivably glorious, all created perfection diminishes in its view; and “Lord! what is man, that thou art mindful of him,” will be the reverent humiliated language. We ought, therefore, to be frequently impressed with such a sense of his greatness, and the infinite obligations we are under to him, as may inspire us with the true spirit of gratitude, devotion, and piety; and excite us to the practice of that religion and virtue, which consist in *doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God.*

REMARKS ON DR. OGILVIE'S POEM ON
THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

FROM causes which it may be difficult to trace, some of the finest poetical productions of this age have been suffered silently to drop into obscurity; and are lost in that general mass of literary lumber which is now read no more.

This appears to be the case with an animated *Poem on the General Judgment*, by Dr. Ogilvie: a poem, in which the energy of Young, the sublimity of Milton, and the harmony of Pope, seem to be happily united. The pleasure I have received in reading this beautiful poem excites me to make a few observations upon it. In the following remarks, I cannot be biassed by any criticisms that may have been formerly made thereon, because I have never read them; nor even seen what sentence the Reviewers passed upon the work. I shall therefore proceed to give my thoughts without farther apology.

After

mountains, and seas, expanded beneath him; and that he is a witness of the awful scenes he relates.

Agreeable to the opinion of some philosophers who wrote before him, he represents the dissolution of nature as occasioned by the approach of a comet to the sun, in such a direction as for its tail to intercept the earth in her orbit. His description of this comet is grand and poetical.

“ But now, with terror, rising on the sight,
A burning Comet flash'd unusual light:
Quick as the wind, the wing'd destruction came
O'er all the void, and drew a length of flame;
Shap'd through the parting clouds its dreadful way,
And pour'd on earth intolerable day.
At once the cave its inmost void displays,
The waving forests catch the spreading blaze;
The earth no more its central fire contains.”

After having, with great beauty of numbers, recounted the various empires and nations, with all their magnificent scenery of art and nature, which must now be wrapt in universal destruction, he introduces an angel, descending and announcing a period to time and all terrestrial things. The sublimity and grandeur exhibited
in

in this part of the poem will, I doubt not, be a sufficient apology to my readers for the length of the quotation.

“ When, lo! a cloud just op’ning on the view
Illum’d, with dazzling light, th’ ethereal blue :
On its broad breast a mighty Angel came,
His eyes were lightning, and his robes of flame ;
O’er all his form the circling glories run,
And his face lighten’d as the blazing fun :
His limbs with heav’n’s aerial vesture glow,
And o’er his head was hung the sweepy bow ;

* * * * *

Sublime he tow’r’d! keen terror arm’d his eyes,
And grasp’d the redd’ning bolt that rends the skies :
One foot stood firmly on th’ extended plain
Secure, and one repell’d the bounding main :
His arm he shook—the lightning burst away,
Through heav’n’s dark concave gleam’d the paly ray ;
Roar’d the loud bolt, tremendous through the gloom,
And peals on peals prepare th’ impending doom :

* * * * *

These dreadful words he spoke :————

“ Be dark, thou Sun, in one eternal night ;
“ And cease, thou Moon, to rule with paler light ;
“ Ye Planets, drop from these dissolving skies ;
“ Rend all ye tombs, and all ye dead arise ;
“ Ye winds, be still ; ye tempests rave no more ;
“ And roll, thou deep, thy millions to the shore ;
“ Earth be dissolv’d, with all these worlds on high ;
“ And, Time, be lost in vast eternity.

" Now, by Creation's dread tremendous Sire,
 " Who sweeps these stars, as atoms, in his ire;
 " By Heav'n's Omnipotent *unconquer'd** King;
 " By him who rides the rapid whirlwind's wing;
 " Who reigns supreme in his august abode;
 " Forms or confounds with one commanding nod;
 " Who wraps in black'ning clouds his awful brow,
 " Whose glance, like light'ning, looks all nature through;
 " By him I swear, * * * * * *
 " * * * that time shall be no more."
 * * * * * * * * * * *

He spoke (all nature groan'd a loud reply)—
 Then shook the sun, and tore him from the sky."

I consider this last thought as one of the bold-
 est and most expressive of the power angelic beings
 possess, that poetry can furnish. The image is in
 the highest degree grand and sublime. The idea
 of a mighty angel, arrayed in all the terrors of
 Majesty, announcing the final dissolution of na-
 ture, and plucking the sun from its sphere, is in-
 conceivably great, and fills the mind with awful
 astonishment. The poet, seems however, to have
 made the speech of the angel too prolix on this
 occasion.

Perhaps he may also have given room for cen-
 sure, in drawing families not equal, as indeed
 none

* This epithet was not necessary, as Omnipotence can never be conquered.

none can be equal, to the subject. But if any may be indulged, in describing an event so great and awful, I think it is the following, although liable to several exceptions.

“ Should’st thou behold, in dreadful league combin’d,
At once great Etna, and Vesuvius join’d;
Two mighty rivals from their center rock
Surround the deep, and hide the hills in smoke:
Their burning bowels rent and (dire to name)
Ev’n suns extinguish’d in the spreading flame!
Say what is all, let fire, wind, waves, prevail,
Compar’d to this?—A feather and a gale!”

Not to dwell on the false rhymes of *rock* and *smoke*;—that the utmost extent of the flames proceeding from Etna and Vesuvius, should be able to contain and extinguish *suns*, is an obvious impropriety, and cannot be admitted even in idea. Such also is the supposition of fire extinguishing fire: but these faults are lost in the numerous beauties this poem contains.

Consonant to the generally received opinion of the resurrection of the *same body*, the poet proceeds to describe the bursting tombs, the grand assemblage of atoms from the various parts of the earth, air, and waters; and their re-union in bodies infinitely more perfect and beautiful than
the

the present race of mankind. But there seems a great impropriety in comparing new-raised immortal bodies to a painting of Raphael's. For,

As the finest productions of the pencil could never equal the beauty of the "human face divine," even in *this* state of existence, it cannot be proper to compare them with beings no longer subject to the imperfections of mortal life, but renewed and "cloathed upon with immortality."

Perhaps a more animated and sublime image was never formed of Death than the following:

"Thron'd on the ruin of terrestrial things,
"He sits, and tramples on the dust of Kings."

In describing the universal concourse of spirits assembled to receive their sentence from the Supreme Judge, our poet does not confine himself to the limits of this globe, but takes in the immense circle of creation. As those vast worlds that roll round our sun, or compose the various systems disseminated through the unbounded regions of space, are reasonably supposed to be peopled with different ranks and orders of intelligent beings, he supposes that those innumerable
millions

millions which inhabit the immensity of space,
will constitute this august assembly.

“ Now all appear, ascending from the tomb,
Who breath'd the air, or slumber'd in the womb :
The crouds that people all th' unbounded skies,
Now rais'd the trembling head with wild surprize :
Stars, with their num'rous sons, augment the throng,
Each world's majestic offspring tow'r'd along ;
Thick as the burning sun's meridian rays,
The hov'ring insects basking in the blaze ;
The swarms that flutter when the day 's withdrawn,
The throng that rises with the rising dawn ;

* * * * *

Rang'd on a field by labouring angels rear'd,
In dreadful length th' innumerable throng appear'd,
Earth's noblest sons ; the mighty wretched things
Call'd Heroes, Consuls, Cæsars, Judges, Kings,
Now swell the croud——”

Without entering into a consideration of the propriety of assembling the inhabitants of *other* worlds, the above description appears amazingly grand and sublime.—In describing this universal assembly, the poet has, in some instances particularly, justly characterised the different nations. For instance,

“ Next Asia's millions fill the extended space,
Known from the rest, a soft unmanly race ;

While

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While there (each bosom rough with many a scar)
Stand Afric's troops, the stormy* sons of war."

In the succeeding lines he shews us the inhabitants of South America, remarking their primitive happiness before the European conquest; and setting forth, in bold and lively imagery, the miseries that ensued on their becoming tributary to *Christian* governors.

"Columbus' world, a wide innumerable throng,
Swells on the straining fight, and pours along.
Blest race! ere discord snatch'd the gleaming shield,
Ere war, tremendous, thunder'd o'er the field,
Ere freedom, ranging o'er Peruvian plains,
Mark'd their dire waste, and heard the clanking chains.
At once dim sorrow veil'd her shining eyes,
She spread her trembling plumes, and ey'd the skies:
Guilt, rage, and death, terrific shapes! appear;
The distant tumult murmur'd in her ear;
She sigh'd; and mounting on the glancing ray,
Shot o'er the scene, and sought the climes of day."

The above description of *Freedom*, driven from her native haunts, ranging over the Peruvian fields, marking the desolation which arbitrary power had made; then spreading her trembling pinions, and taking her flight from this horrid scene

* Why not *swartby*.—The epithet *stormy* would have been quite as proper for the rough and barbarous legions of northern climes.

scene of guilt, rage, and death, to the skies, contains noble and glowing sentiments; and is embellished with some of the finest graces of poetry.

After concluding his account of the universal assemblage of all "nations, kindreds, tongues, "and people," and before he enters on the more awful events of that solemn discriminating day, he addresses the Deity in the following animated invocation:—

"Eternal God! whose word, supremely wise
Can crush, or people all th' extended skies!
Who bid'st creation wait on thy command,
Throw'st worlds like atoms from thy forming hand;
Oh for some nobler, more exalted lays,
Some heav'nly strains to speak thy boundless praise.
All fancy droops on this transporting scene,
All rapture dull; all elegance is mean;
All thought too faint; all colours cease to glow;
All fire too languid; all sublime too low!"

How just are his sentiments on this august subject!

In the second book he represents, in a striking manner, Conscience awakening, and stripping off the disguise of hypocrisy; all the vain subterfuges of self-love, and self-deception; and shewing

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every

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every action in its true colours, with Virtue fighting at the prospect, in doubt what would be the event, till *Hope*

“ Dispell'd the hovering mist that veil'd her eyes.”

Having described the heavenly emotions of the virtuous, on anticipating the awful catastrophe; he then contrasts them with the following animated painting of the terrors felt by the wicked:—

“ But mark that throng; what keen destructive smart,
What peircing anguish, sting the tortur'd heart:
While Pain's fell brood, in dreadful concourse join'd,
Fear, rage, and guilt, distract the madd'ning mind.
'The gentle calm, the hours of mercy fled,
At last slow vengeance rears its Gorgon head;
No time remains to ease the throbbing breast;
No friend to soothe the racking soul to rest;
No shade to screen from Heav'n's impending doom,
No hope to sleep in yon dissolving tomb;
'Tis past:—and lo! the black'ning clouds appear,
Involving darkness wraps the boundless sphere;
While, thro' the gloom, just darting on their eyes,
The last pale beam shoots, trembles, fades, and dies.”

To this the poet adds a pathetic expostulation with his readers, on the folly and blindness of mankind with respect to the momentous business
of

of the *present*, and their great inattention to what may be their lot in another life: but to finish my observations on this excellent poem shall be the business of another essay.

REMARKS ON DR. OGILVIE'S POEM
CONTINUED, AND CONCLUDED.

IN page 47 our author introduces the Almighty as descending to judge the world. I am aware of the objection that justly lies against an attempt to which the strongest exertion of human genius must ever be inadequate. Perhaps a reflection, how impossible it is for finite beings even to *comprehend* that which is infinite, ought here to have repressed the aspirings of his muse, and led him to draw a veil over a scene so inconceivably awful: but as he has, with "adventrous wing," rose into description, it is but just to allow that this description glows with all the pomp and grandeur of poetical imagery.

" * * * * from his great abode,
Full on a whirlwind, came the dreadful God:
The tempest, ratt'ling, wings the fiery car;
Ten thousand hosts, his ministers of war.

The flaming Cherubim attend his flight,
 And heav'n's foundations groan'd beneath their weight:
 Through all the skies his forky lightnings play'd;
 With radiant splendor glow'd his beamy head;
 From his bright eyes the trembling throngs retire;
 He spoke in thunder, and he breath'd in fire:
 He stood; o'er all the boundless glory shone,
 Then call'd, and darkness form'd his gloomy throne.
 Black clouds hung awful round the bursting ray,
 And veil'd from sight th' intolerable day."

If we except some passages in the sacred writings, which will ever remain superior to the most exalted efforts of human genius, the imagination can scarcely conceive any thing more sublime and awful than the above passage. Why then did the poet so injudiciously break in upon that silent astonishment and awe, which must fill the mind of the reader at the conclusion of these lines, by introducing a simile, which, though great and beautiful in itself, bears no more proportion to the august scene with which it is contrasted, than the *glow-worm's* feeble ray does to the *sun* in his meridian splendor?

After this the poet again endeavours to paint the anguish and terror which wicked men will feel in the anticipation of their doom; the bare
 idea

idea of which (he tells us) is so dreadful, that they would joyfully endure the most excruciating corporeal pain to escape its vengeance. But take it in his own words.

“ Lo! the wide field, where thousands, in despair,
Would smile at death, and hug the mangling spear;
Where, fir'd with rage too big to be express'd,
They'd bless the reeking blade that tore their breast.
O with what joy some mortal wound they'd feel,
With what delight they'd clasp the pointed steel,
Hung on the smarting rack, or stretch'd upon the wheel. }
Blest, were some mountain at th' Eternal's call
Whirl'd from its base to crush them in the fall;
Would Heav'n's great Sovereign hear their only prayer,
To strew their limbs like atoms in the air;
Would some devouring flame their dust consume,
Or deep volcano hide them in its womb,
With their last breath they'd praise JEHOVAH's name,
And bless their dreadful sentence in the flame.
But, ah, 'tis all in vain.” —

In the last cited passage four of the lines are rendered inharmonious by the flat sounding abbreviation *they'd*, which can never please a poetical ear. There is also a false rhyme; and the whole appears too much laboured: but the sentiments it conveys are warranted by inspiration, in that short, but far more sublime expression, “ they shall call on the rocks and mountains to fall
upon

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“upon them,” &c. The poet had doubtless this passage in his eye, in the eighth line.

After expressing a desire, that the sense of an event so great and awful may never be absent from his mind, he asks the reader,

“Say, do'st thou long to reach yon distant sky?”

And, after remarking that it is not the *sudden start*, the *transient flash of thought*, the *darting impulse*, or *loose sally of keen desire*, that can render men the proper objects of Divine favour in that solemn hour, he proceeds to shew what *will* constitute them successful candidates for future blessedness, and glory.

“ * * * 'Tis a work that grows upon the sight ;
 'Tis godlike Virtue's regular delight.
 Th' intrepid soul, by passions ne'er alarm'd,
 Improv'd by judgment, as by fancy warm'd ;
 'Whose zeal with reason's rigid dictates forts,
 Glows, but not blazes ; warms, but not transports ;
 Whose conduct, squar'd by every noble rule,
 Forms one proportion'd, just, consistent whole :
 'Tis he, who does whate'er a mortal can * *
 * * * * *
 When keen temptation prompts the heart to stray,
 And the warm tumult melts the soul away,

Who

Who then from heav'n awaits directing light,
And stands unshaken in superior might :
This, this is he, who, in serene repose,
Can coolly smile at earth's convulsive throes.

In the above passage, the most interesting truths are blended with the pleasing mild graces of poetry, and while they charm the ear, find their way to the heart. Where instruction is thus interwoven with the expressive touches of eloquence, the reader will not spend his time in barren amusement, but find his heart made better while his imagination is entertained and improved.

The poet next represents the great "Judge of quick and dead," as taking one comprehensive view of the vast assemblage of beings who stand before him, awaiting the decision of their fate.

" O'er all the crowd he took one vast survey,
With eyes that view the darkness as the day :
Each deep design though hid behind a cloud,
With secret acts, a countless multitude,
Whate'er beneath the conscious sun was wrought,
He knew, and weigh'd in one *prodigious* thought."

An unhappy epithet for *thought* as could have been introduced. Would the subject admit of
it

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it, the reader might be indulged in a little risibility: but where so many real beauties strike us, we ought not to be too severe. Even Homer sometimes nodded.

He then describes, with great energy, the awakening of conscious guilt in the minds of those, who (as Shakespeare strongly expresses it)

“—— had within them undivulged crimes
Unwhipt of Justice;”

and proceeds to a pathetic expostulation with them on their past folly, and forgetfulness of that Omniscient Being who continually beholds them.

After describing, figuratively, the different emotions of justice and mercy in the Deity, the poet represents him as rising in all the terrors of incensed Omnipotence, and pronouncing on the wicked, their irrevocable doom.

“ He rose—his looks the coming judgment flow,
Resentment darken'd his majestic brow;
'Then view'd the throng beneath his footstool spread;
Shook with a nod the burning skies, and said,
“ Depart, ye damn'd———”

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The removal of the wicked to their everlasting habitations is then described in language suitably adapted to the horror of the scene, according to the commonly received orthodox opinion of this final catastrophe.

The reader is now addressed with the following beautiful lines, which are not less calculated to amend the heart, than to delight the ear capable of harmony.

“ Would’st thou, O man, avoid th’ unbounded woe;
Would’st feel thy breast with endless raptures glow;
Would’st thou with triumph hear the thunder roll,
That rocks the trembling earth from pole to pole:
Retire;—be deaf to grandeur’s vain alarm,
Its gilded darts, that sting thee while they charm;
Let life’s gay scenes engage thy soul no more,
Pomp, beauty, youth, the bubbles of an hour!
Fix every thought on thy immortal part;
Bid Heav’n attend——then ask thy trembling heart,
How have I walk’d through all this mazy road?
How liv’d to gain the plaudit of my God?
How spoke? How acted? * * * *”

He next represents in the most sublime and animated manner, the scene that ensues; and introduces a fine and just simile, to set forth the glow of joy that fills the minds, and overspreads

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the

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the countenances of the virtuous, on that approaching sentence, which consigns them to the celestial regions.

“ But lo! my soul, the clouds at length are o'er;
The storm is calm'd; the thunders cease to roar:
See, blooming love, as cloudless skies serene,
Smiles heav'nly sweet, and brightens all the scene!
So some loud whirlwind, with resistless sweep,
Heaves the wild waves, and blackens on the deep;
The fainting mariners with pale despair,
Behold the ocean's boiling bosom bare:
When lo! at once the roaring winds subside;
A gentle breeze plays smoothly o'er the tide:
Now each, enraptur'd, views th' emerging ray;
Now breathes, delighted, in the blaze of day:
Groves, mountains, woods, appear, a charming train!
The ship glides lightly through the liquid plain;
The liquid plain reflects the waving beam,
And Heav'n's fine azure glitters in the stream.”

In this simile, which I think one of the finest in the poem, the contrast between confusion and terror, and peace, order, and beauty, is strikingly exhibited; and in many of the lines, the sound is a fine eccho to the sense.

Then, after the following invocation,

“ Some Seraph, teach my daring song to rise;
Oh let me catch the music of the skies;

Illume

Illume my breast, exalt, refine, the whole;
And pour melodious numbers on my soul——”

he proceeds to the following sublime description
of the celestial scene in prospect:

“ What glories burst on my transported sight,
What charms, with more than mortal beauty bright!
What anthems ring! what melting lays inspire!
What godlike Angels strike the sounding lyre!
See, every face the softest smiles assume!
How glows each feature with celestial bloom!
A bloom untouch'd by all-devouring time,
Like flow'rs that blossom in perpetual prime;
Lo! where in fight th' Angelic armies move!
See! opening fair the balmy climes of love!
Blest climes! where music strikes the warbling string;
Where joy, exulting, spreads his airy wing;
Where, shrin'd in bliss, triumphant beauty reigns,
And spring's eternal blush adorns the plains.”

The poet then describes the Supreme Judge,
as divested of his terrors, and appearing in the
milder glories of Divine beneficence and love, to
reward the virtuous with “glory, honour, im-
“ mortality, and eternal life.”

“ For lo! he comes, a victor o'er the grave,
In triumph mild, exalted but to save:
In crouds th' applauding hosts surround their King;
They tune their harps, and touch the finest string.

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Angelic concert! Musically flow
 It steals more soft than vernal breezes blow:
 Then swells a sprightly note;—all Heav'n replies,
 And labouring eccho rings it thro' the skies.
 Now, bright as heav'n, as mild Aurora fair,
 * * * * *

He rose, with mercy beaming from his sight;
 Then smil'd, and look'd ineffable delight.
 * * * * *

“Come now ye blessed.——”

After having ended the glorious sentence passed on the virtuous, (which has, throughout, a beautiful allusion to what is left us on the subject in the sacred writings) the poet closes the august scene with the following animated lines, and pertinent simile:

“Here pause—no more by man can be express'd:
 Ye Saints, ye wond'ring Seraphs, tell the rest!
 As through the clouds some tow'ring eagle springs,
 And flies like lightning, on impetuous wings,
 He views, unmov'd, the burning sun display'd;
 The wavy fire plays harmless round his head:
 Quick as a thought of the ærial mind,
 To heav'n he mounts, and leaves the stars behind:
 Thus wrapt at once from our attending view,
 Through the broad gates the rising concourse flew,
 Till far remov'd, scarce to the distant sight
 The triumph glow'd, with fainter glories bright,
 Ascending still, till it appeared no more;
 We look'd, and all the swimming scene was o'er.”

This

This ends the quotations I proposed making from this excellent poem. The intelligent reader need not be told, that, striking as they appear in this detached state, they lose much of that beauty and force which adorn them when read with the context, and the whole is viewed together.

I shall conclude this essay, with a few general observations on the whole. In this work, the poet's design seemed to have been, not merely the entertainment, but the moral and religious instruction of mankind. To furnish the former, he has combined, in one sublime picture, the various graces of poetry. Loftiness of thought, rich imagery, and harmony of numbers, are all powerful candidates for our praise. To effect the latter, he has chosen a subject of all others the most interesting, and the most awful; and enforced the motives to virtue with peculiar energy of sentiment and language. It is easy to perceive that many of the finest passages in his work owe their excellence to the volumes of inspiration. It was here and here only that the author could find a basis whereon to erect the beautiful fabric with security.

From

From this peerless source of all that is sublime and great, he has drawn his richest materials, and given us a work, which I doubt not will yet emerge from its present obscurity, and obtain an honourable place in our libraries.

There are indeed a few imperfections, which, when separately attended to, offend readers of taste and judgment; but these seem to proceed rather from the luxuriance than the barrenness of the poet's imagination; and on an enlarged view of the whole, they are lost in the lustre that furrounds them.

The public are certainly under great obligations to Dr. Ogilvie, for adding this treasure to the republic of letters; and I hope they will not think I have impertinently trespassed on their time and patience, in pointing out some of its beauties to such of my readers as may not yet have seen it.

LETTER

LETTER TO TWO STUDENTS AT CAM-
BRIDGE, ON THE QUALIFICATIONS
NECESSARY FOR A CLERGYMAN.

GENTLEMEN,

I Was some weeks since favoured with your polite and affectionate letter. By its contents I find you are not fully determined in the choice of your profession. In a matter of so much importance, deliberation is certainly necessary; and I wish that, after weighing every circumstance, you may determine right. Requesting my thoughts on your taking orders, evinces the good opinion you have formed of my judgment; but I am not sufficiently qualified to advise in a matter of such moment. You will therefore kindly excuse my attempting it. The other part of the task you have laid upon me, to wit, desiring my thoughts on *the qualifications necessary for a Clergyman*, I shall endeavour to perform in the best manner I am able. In complying therewith it is far from my intention to offend any who fill, or may intend to fill, that station. I may probably step out of the
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beaten track; nevertheless nothing shall be offered but what Reason and the New Testament will justify. Supported by these authorities I shall give myself little concern what any may think, whose conduct comes within the line of just censure.

A clergyman stands in a high and important office. When he fills it properly, he becomes a truly respectable and venerable character. When he disgraces it, by suffering his own conduct to contradict his profession and precepts, he becomes truly despicable.

Consistent with the constitution of the established church, he ought to possess good abilities, and a well-cultivated understanding. His learning ought to be sufficient for enabling him to read the scriptures in the original languages, to set the great doctrines of christianity in a clear and strong light, and to defend them against the insidious attacks of their enemies. It is not essentially necessary he should be deeply skilled in school-divinity, the polite arts, or be at the pains of acquiring a general knowledge of ancient and modern literature.

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He ought certainly to be of a good natural temper, and to feel as well as profess a sincere desire for the promotion of religion, and the increase and exaltation of that kingdom which is not of this world. In proportion as this desire lives and increases in his mind, he will be diligent in the faithful discharge of his office. He will inform the ignorant, strengthen the weak, admonish the remiss, and reprove the vicious, without respect of persons, rank, or station. But his prudence will lead him to avoid *particular applications* in the public exercise of his ministry. The gentle admonitions of an affectionate pastor will rarely fail of producing some good effect in private; but the passions of men are generally too irritable to admit of any benefit from the public reprehension of personal folly or misconduct. He will also be particularly careful to avoid in his own conduct whatever the duties of his office as a minister require him to condemn in other men.

The most essential qualifications of a bishop, minister, or pastor, (and without which all other accomplishments will be insufficient) are those described by the Apostle Paul in his epistle to Titus, chap. i. v. 7, 8, 9.

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“ A Bishop

“ A Bishop (saith the Apostle) must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince gain-sayers.”

And in chap. iii. v. 2, he directs, that “ they should speak evil of no man, be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness to all men.”

These are qualifications which the Holy Ghost has directed all should possess who undertake to minister to the people; for under the term Bishop are included all Pastors or Ministers in the christian church. They are therefore equally necessary in, and equally the duty of, the inferior as of the dignified clergy.

As the principles of christianity remain unchangeable through all ages, the necessity of its teachers possessing these qualifications must ever remain the same. They are equally obligatory now, as in the days of the Apostles; and no power
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of sophistry, or artful exposition of words, can paraphrase them away. They are described in terms so explicit, that to mistake them is impossible. They constitute a plain criterion, by which all who assume the sacred function of ministers ought to measure their own conduct, for by this the sensible part of mankind will always judge them.

What judgment will be formed of men, (if such there be) standing in this sacred character, whose general conduct is a sad reverse of the above-mentioned amiable qualifications;—men who are covetous, proud, revengeful, intemperate, and regardless of almost every moral as well as religious obligation?

Instead of promoting the cause of universal righteousness, which is the only valuable end of all preaching, these “leaders of the people cause them to err;” and prove themselves utterly unworthy the station they fill, and the maintenance they receive as public teachers. The cause of religion and virtue sustains unspeakable injury from the sad effects of their example, and immorality exults in the encouragement it receives from their misconduct. Until the christian church is purged of such teachers, the reproach they have

brought upon it can never be taken away. While these sons of pollution are permitted to administer at the altar, the enemies of christianity, when the excellency of its precepts is urged against them, will point with insulting triumph, and cry out, "*These are thy Gods, O Israel!*"

- If it be the duty of ministers to discourage vice, and promote the practice of virtue *in* the pulpit, it is still more obligatory on them to be especially careful of their own conduct *out* of it. If ~~they~~ fail in the latter, the former will be unavailing. With what face can an immoral man presume to instruct others in the great duties of religion, or even of moral virtue? What good effect can he reasonably expect will attend his instructions? To suppose that the divine blessing will attend such un sanctified labours, is inconsistent with reason. They tend rather to confirm men in their sins, and to beget a total disregard to religion itself.

People will be led to think religion only a solemn farce, when they see the very teachers of it give up all decency of character, and act in direct opposition to the precepts it enjoins.

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An immoral clergyman is more contemptible than other men. That ignorance which in some measure palliates the crimes of the vulgar will not extenuate his guilt, or screen him from deserved censure, because he cannot plead it. He acts against stronger convictions than others, and has no cloak for his sin. The state of such is truly deplorable. They stand on the brink of a precipice, in the most imminent danger. The accumulated weight of their own transgressions, and the sins of others made worse by their example, will rest heavy upon them in that solemn day, when "inquisition for blood" shall be made by the Judge of quick and dead.

On the contrary, many and great are the advantages that accrue from ministers filling up the duties of their station with propriety. They stand in a conspicuous point of view, and their conduct is scrutinized more than that of other men. For this very reason, they ought to be peculiarly circumspect. They should not content themselves with being only blameless in their lives, but aspire after the more noble character of examples to their flocks in every department of christian duty. The care of souls is an important charge, and of those who undertake it much will be required.

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On the proper discharge of their respective duties, the peace and harmony of society, and the promotion of virtue and religion, greatly depend. If to *precept* they add the more powerful influence of *good example*, the effects on their hearers will soon appear.

A minister solicitous to advance the best interests of his fellow-creatures, will be convinced that it is necessary for him to avoid whatever tends to obstruct his usefulness, by lessening him in the opinion and estimation of his people, by derogating from that sanctity of character without which his admonitions will be ineffectual, or by prejudicing them against those truths it is his duty to inculcate. He will see the propriety of discovering no partiality to the wealthy but perhaps least serious part of his parishioners, either by devoting himself too much to their company, or by connivance at that conduct in them, which he would condemn in the inferior classes of the people. It is to be feared, that in some instances the immorality of the poor is in part occasioned by the countenance given to the irreligious manners of their superiors, by ministers in other respects unblameable.

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He will also be cautious of hazarding the esteem of his audience by a too warm attachment to his temporal emolument. In some cases wherein the laws of his country may justify him in asserting his rights, the spirit of the gospel, and an ardent desire to do good, will induce him rather to sustain some little injury, than to risk the probability of his future success, by insisting too rigidly on claims generally disgusting to mankind, and which have only human laws for their foundation.

The friendly instructions of a pious, kind, benevolent teacher have great place with his audience: he will reach their hearts, and gain their love and esteem. They will sit under his teaching with pleasure, and reap a lasting advantage from the truths he delivers. He will see the fruits of his labour whilst here, and consider them as the earnest of a future blessed reward. Having been concerned to discharge faithfully the trust committed to him, he will approach his end in peace, and rejoice in the anticipation of that state wherein "those who have turned many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever."

I have now given you my thoughts with freedom; and entertain too high an opinion of your understandings

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understandings to make any apology. In the above remarks I have no view to reflect on the clergy as a body of men. Many of those with whom I have had the honour to be acquainted, are men of very liberal minds and amiable characters. If there are any of an opposite complexion, "them only have I offended."

I am, &c.

Your cordial Friend,

ON

ON THE EVIL TENDENCY OF IMMO-
RAL WRITINGS.

THERE is no employment more worthy the Christian Philosopher than to promote the promulgation of right principles, and the increase of useful knowledge, by placing the moral, social, and religious duties of life in the most interesting and amiable point of view before mankind. It is in this light that I survey the exercise of human abilities with the greatest satisfaction. The most eminent display of fine parts and genius ceases to attract just praise or admiration when it ceases to promote these valuable ends; and when it tends to strengthen men's passions, or take off the restraints which reason ought to have over them, it becomes a proper object of censure.

That the general torrent of vice, corruption, folly, and dissipation, has been often impeded by the pens of moralists, as well as by declamations from the pulpit, is a truth which I believe few will deny. Even works of wit and humour, when

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judiciously

judiciously pointed at vice, have had a better effect than merely to amuse and entertain mankind. Many, who would laugh at the solemnity of vocal declamation, or the rigid documents of sober reason, have attended with seriousness to the more pleasing language of moral precepts in the closet. The pill, which in its native hue would have been rejected, has, when thus gilded, been taken with avidity, and had its proper effect on the mind.

The effect of single attempts to reform mankind, and correct vulgar errors in speculation and practice, like that of drops of water falling on a stone, may be imperceptible; but their continued force has made a sensible impression, and contributed much to the general welfare. There are still amongst us numbers whom Heaven has blessed with a large share of knowledge. Their intellectual powers are strong and vigorous. The latent springs of the human heart lie open to their view. They see the dangers that await us in the perilous journey of life; and are capable of setting up land-marks in the way to guide the ignorant and incautious traveller.

How happy would it be were such diligently to exercise their talents for the good of mankind, by
pointing

pointing out with precision the path to happiness, and enforcing, with persuasive eloquence and energy, the practice of virtue.

Instead of merely amusing, not to say corrupting, as some have done, the minds of the people, let them treat on subjects which are essentially interesting to rational beings. To endeavour by sound reasoning to remove that false bias with which education, custom, and the indulgence of sensuality, have misled the judgment, will ever be pleasing to the candid and sensible part of mankind. Such will consider every attempt of this kind as the product of an upright mind, and those who make them auxiliaries in the cause of virtue.

But it is greatly to be regretted that many persons of bright genius and distinguished abilities, have shamefully prostituted their talents to purposes unworthy their attention. Instead of striving to weaken, they have strengthened the influence of men's animal passions. Instead of exposing human folly, they have encouraged it. Instead of checking, they have promoted the growth of vice and irreligion. Instead of rectifying and exalting the minds of their readers, they have corrupted and debased them. While

furnished with power and opportunity to *regulate*, they have employed it in *confusing* men's ideas of right and wrong, by giving encouragement to the licentiousness of passions, and disturbing the harmony of the intellectual œconomy.

A conduct like this merits the contempt of every man who is concerned for the interest and well-being of his fellow-creatures. Charity itself can scarcely admit an excuse for it in men who have not the plea of ignorance to urge in their defence. In the hour of inattention, when the passions are clamorous, and temptations strongly allure us, it is not surprizing that men should often yield to their power. Human nature is very weak, and vice screened in the mask of pleasure may then deceive them. We behold their errors with pity, and that pity effaces their crimes from the register of our memory. But what terms of ignominy can be too severe for him who sits down in the hours of cool reflection, and deliberates on the means of promoting most successfully, the cause of folly, dissipation, infidelity in principle, and immorality in practice?

To study methods of spreading that poison and depravity which are already too widely diffused,
and

and endeavour, by eradicating the principles of virtue from the human mind, to deprive it of that happiness which alone renders the present life valuable, and is the basis on which all its future hopes are founded, discovers a heart not only alienated from the love of every thing that is good, but hardened to all sense of shame, and sunk in the deepest depravity. The accumulated censure of every good and wise man ought to rest heavy on the heads of such monsters, and stigmatize them with lasting disgrace and infamy.

If these remarks are admitted to be just, what shall we think of many too generally admired writers in the last and present ages? Better, far better, had it been for mankind, had these authors been idiots, than thus to have abused their talents in enflaming the passions, and corrupting the morals of the people.

Every action that promotes vice or error, is justly censurable, however limited its apparent effects; because it is by the limited power of small causes, that the aggregate of human evil is produced.

“Sands form the mountain, moments make the year.”

On

On the contrary, every attempt to advance the interests of truth and universal righteousness, be it ever so small, entitles the actor to public esteem, as well as to the gratulations of an approving conscience.

He who with small abilities does his best to promote virtue, peace, and order, is equally entitled to our regard with the man of shining talents, even though his attempts may not be productive of equal visible success. It ought not to be any discouragement to such, if little fruits appear from their labour. If they have acted their part on the stage of life, be that part ever so small, they will meet the approbation of him who "judgeth righteously in the earth," and find, in the end of days, that complacency and peace which nothing can destroy.

Let considerations of this sort excite to diligence in whatever lies within the reach of our abilities. In the estimation of true wisdom, none are *great* or *little* but as they are virtuous or vicious. The crime next in degree and turpitude to actual vice, is that of encouraging it in others. In some instances, the latter is the greatest. A man who possesses a fertile imagination, or strong powers of reasoning,

reasoning, may corrupt more minds by his writings than by his example. The latter, from various causes, may be confined within a narrow sphere; but the former may circulate in regions where the author was never known, and extend to ages that succeed his dissolution. Dissolute and licentious as Rochester was, his writings have contaminated multitudes more than his actions. The same may be said of those two great luminaries in genius and learning, Bolingbroke and Voltaire. The *graces* and fine sense of a Chesterfield will not atone for the poison so *gracefully* conveyed in his polished pages.

Considerations of this kind ought to have peculiar weight with writers of acknowledged taste and genius. From the pen of a Johnson, a Robertson, a Beattie, or a Gibbons, error, should it escape them, might prove fatal to thousands.

In reading the works of such men, we forget that they are fallible, and, charmed with the elegance and energy of their diction, receive their sentiments with a kind of implicit faith, which precludes enquiry or examination. Such writers know not the extent of that influence which their sentiments may have in the world—sentiments
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which when published are no longer exclusively their own, but, mixed with the general mass of literature, become the property of the public, and in proportion as they are right or wrong, may prove beneficial or injurious to thousands.

Numbers of our youth have been greatly injured by that tide of pernicious novels, which during these last twenty years have been the disgrace of our public libraries.

These, although in general too contemptible to gain the attention of any sensible reader, are adapted to idle, thoughtless, and superficial minds, who in reading, only seek amusement for the present hour. Such books may be compared to that species of poison which operating insensibly on the body, destroys by slow degrees, its vital stamina. Their effects are not felt but by the consequence: they amuse the mind, inflame its passions, lull its reflecting powers into a kind of lethargy, relax the springs of virtue, weaken the restrictions of prudence, and gradually reconcile the mind to objects and actions, which it would otherwise retreat from with abhorrence.

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I know the stale pretence of most novel-writers is to give a moral lesson in a pleasing manner; and to render vice hateful, and virtue amiable, by exhibiting pictures of human life. But this is a false representation of the matter. To *get money* by an idle employment is their grand motive: consequently they must accommodate their writings to the taste of the age, however depraved. Hence we see their vicious characters are generally represented as enjoying a round of dissolute pleasure and success; or if for awhile they suffer, they are reformed and rendered happy by some sudden and unnatural course of events, which never happen in real life. Virtue they indeed sometimes affect to represent as the only permanent substantial good, but bestow little pains to render her truly amiable. If they attempt to recommend or enforce her precepts, it is generally so awkwardly as to prove they have little acquaintance with her, or with such languor as evinces them to be little concerned to advance her interests. Sometimes to raise a laugh at her expence, she is set in a ridiculous light. On the contrary, vice and folly are dressed up with all the pomp of imagery, even while they affect to condemn them. By these means, their influence on the mind and conduct is secretly promoted.*

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But it is the duty of those who are blessed with real genius and sense to attempt the instruction and entertainment of their readers by means very different—to form the mind to virtue, by engaging both the passions and the judgment in its interests—to inform and enlighten—to animate and restrain—to enoble the soul, and lead it in the path to true felicity.

Writings of this kind merit the respect of all men, and will obtain permanent esteem and honour, while learning, sense, religion, and virtue, remain in the world.

* In this censure of modern novels I mean not to include all productions of the kind. Some may be read with safety and even improvement. Among these, EMMA CORBETT claims particular recommendation. This excellent work is admirably calculated

“To wake the soul by tender strokes of art,

“To raise the genius, and to mend the heart.”

If the most forcible appeal to the feelings of humanity, and the purest and most delicate sentiments of love and virtue, struggling under the most embittered dispensations of human woe, can affect or mend the heart, this work will long be read with delight. But he who can peruse it without shedding the tears of virtuous sensibility, must be destitute of those empassioned feelings which do honour to human nature.

ON THE NECESSITY AND ADVANTAGE
OF KNOWING OURSELVES.

“ Know thyself.”

BIAS.

THE true knowledge of ourselves is the most valuable of all sciences; and to attain it, the most necessary of all acquisitions. Upon this knowledge depend the propriety of our actions, our safety, and much of our present happiness.

These truths are generally assented to in theory, but seldom prove sufficiently operative on our practice. Few willingly submit to pursue the arduous examination, What they are—how constituted—what relation they stand in to other beings—and what is the nature, extent, and influence of their passions and mental faculties? Almost every other kind of enquiry takes place of this, although it is the most important of any that can employ the mind of man. While we are solicitous to become acquainted with every thing without us,

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we voluntarily remain strangers to, and ignorant of ourselves.

Three reasons may be assigned for this neglect: the first is, that from infancy we are taught to employ the greater part of our thoughts and attention on *material* objects, and in reasoning from, and about them. The second is, that an enquiry into the nature of our own minds, and the strength and influence of our faculties and passions, requires a stronger exertion of thought than is agreeable to that indolence in which mankind are too apt to repose. And the third is, that self-examination often presents a humiliating prospect to the mind, and convicts it of its own folly and imprudence; and is on that account disagreeable to us.—On these causes I shall make a few observations,

The usual mode of educating youth is very unfavourable to the knowledge of ourselves. The years of infancy are spent in mere trifling and amusement. When the period of life arrives, in which the mental faculties begin to expand and acquire vigour, the hours of instruction and study are confined to the common beaten track of school-learning. The languages, arts, and sciences,

ences, close the scene, and finish the man. He is indeed taught the general system of moral ethics, and perhaps some care is taken to enrich his mind with principles of religion and virtue: but little or no care is exercised to excite in him an enquiry whence his various passions arise—by what they are excited or restrained—how he may best govern and direct them aright—and what is the nature and extent of those noble powers of reason and understanding which he possesses.

Hence, when he has finished his education, and ripens into manhood, he is of nothing so ignorant as himself. He has never examined the cause of his ideas—whence his passions arise—to what they most strongly tend—how they are best controuled—and what connection the various powers of the understanding have with each other, and with the objects on which they are or ought to be exercised. Unaccustomed to close thinking, he seldom acquires that just train of reasoning by which alone discoveries of this kind are made. Having never been taught to regulate his ideas with precision, he is lost in a labyrinth. He appears a riddle to himself, which he cannot explain; the employment becomes irksome, and he flies to sensible objects for amusement and gratification.

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By this voluntary renunciation of their noblest privileges, and neglect of their mental powers, men become strangers to themselves, and remain contented in a state of ignorance which often proves fatal to their peace and happiness. Of the secret springs of their own actions, and of the natural means Heaven has furnished them with to avoid error, and embrace truth, they have no clear ideas. Hence they flatter themselves into a belief that their errors spring from necessity; that wisdom and virtue are not in any high degree attainable in this state of existence, and of course they are not endeavouring to arrive at that perfection of which their reasonable and intellectual nature is capable.

From the want of knowing ourselves, arise two of the greatest errors that the human mind is capable of, viz. ambition, and superstition. The man who has never, by a careful examination of his intellectual powers, discovered their imperfection, considers himself as a kind of independant being, and sets up his reason as the supreme judge, and God of his idolatry. Whatever he cannot comprehend by it, he ridicules, and stamps with the epithet of enthusiasm. Hence he denies many of the sublimest mysteries of the christian religion,

religion, "calls imperfection what he fancies "such," and in the pride of his heart sometimes calls in question the providence, or prophanely arraigns the dispensations and œconomy, of an All-Perfect Being.

Having by these means reasoned himself out of his religion, he soon relaxes his system of morals, and adapts it rather to the impulse of his own passions, than the nature of things, or the revealed will of his Creator. Human laws now become the only check upon his conduct. His virtues are merely constitutional, or such as he practises for the sake of obtaining the honour and applause of men. His vices are indulged in proportion to the strength of his passions, or the opportunity he has of gratifying them with present safety. To gain power, or wealth, or fame, is his principal study. At the shrine of these deities every wise, religious, and moral consideration is sacrificed. His days are spent in pride, pleasure, and a disregard to every thing which becomes the humility of beings liable to innumerable errors and dangers, and the dignity of that immortal nature which they possess, and by which they are allied to angels.

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In others, the want of knowing themselves produces effects of a different and opposite nature. From this uncultivated ground spring superstition and bigotry. Men of dull phlegmatic constitutions, seeing the general prevalence of sensual passions in others, and feeling their effects in themselves, have, through ignorance of the frame and constitution of the human mind, wantonly pronounced human nature itself as altogether fallen, wicked, and devilish. They have not distinguished between the natural powers of man as the gift of his Creator, and those powers when corrupted, debased, and perverted, by wilful disobedience to the divine laws, and the unrestrained indulgence of the animal passions. But because some have darkened their understandings by vicious practice, and perverted their reason, these men condemn the whole together; pronounce those noble powers themselves corrupt; and exclaim with all the bitterness of an ignorant zeal against the use of them. Hence arise many of the gross errors in religious speculation and practice, which are a scandal to the profession of christianity. Hence spring bigotry, uncharitableness, and spiritual pride; and hence proceed all the idle clamour of passionate or weak-headed zealots against the exercise of men's reason and understanding

standing in matters appertaining to religion. Hence also arise false notions respecting the Deity and his adorable attributes, and the erroneous modes of worship which we see adopted by the enthusiastic and superstitious part of mankind, to the disgrace of religion itself.

Self-examination, and an acquaintance with the nature and extent of the powers and passions with which we are endued, would discover the folly and error of that inattention which is the object of my censure. Many have entered on this important task, but, from the humiliating prospect which first presents itself, have shrunk back, and sought repose in ignorance. They have discovered, that many of their actions, which gained the approbation of the public as well of themselves, sprung from motives very different from those to which self-flattery had ascribed them. They see temperance sometimes springing from the fear of disease; chastity from the dread of shame; honesty practised with a view to interest, and the confidence of mankind; and general regularity of manners, to obtain respect and honour in the world. They perhaps feel an impulse in themselves to many vices, which outward considerations only tend to restrain them from; and are conscious of

so many secret faults, that the prospect becomes too painful to be long indulged.

But such should consider, that whatever they see of this kind, it is in their power to rectify. The weakness of their minds may be strengthened; its wanderings may be restrained; its languor may be invigorated; its views may be directed to proper objects, and its activity increased. The natural tendency of the passions may be explored and regulated; their career may be checked, or their force applied to some useful and salutary purpose. The knowledge of our ruling passions, and to what they tend, will instruct us to correct their influence, timely to retreat from the objects of their gratification, and to guard the avenues, through which danger may assail us.

Let the man, whose ruling passion is the indulgence of his appetites, beware of trusting himself at a feast; or of joining the convivial circle over a bottle. If Avarice govern him, let him call a little pride to his aid, as the lesser evil, which will best correct the other, by exciting him to despise its meanness. If Ambition rule him, he should either retreat from whatever feeds it, or render it a virtue, by suffering it only to excite him

him to acts of public benefit to mankind. If Honour and Fame are the objects of his pursuit, and have charms which he cannot resist, let him seek to obtain them by such a course of virtuous and honourable conduct as merits them.

Thus most of our passions may either be restrained within due bounds, by encouraging their opposites, or rendered useful by turning them into proper channels. None of them were given to be extirpated or wholly restrained. They are only to be regulated by the more noble faculties, under the influence of a superior principle.

Love is the parent of almost every virtue. Anger is necessary to prevent our sinking into a state of pusillanimity, which would encourage every species of insult and imposition. Avarice and prodigality stand opposed to each other; in a public light, the one is necessary to the being of the other; either singly would soon prove destructive to human happiness. Pride, although not the proper object of man's indulgence, may under some circumstances be useful. It prevents our relaxing into ignorance and barbarism; it is also the parent of shame; and shame prevents the open indulgence of many vices in men who want a bet-

ter motive. Ambition, although productive of many dismal consequences when indulged on a large scale, is often productive of good; when turned into proper channels, it becomes a species of emulation which excites men to the most noble and beneficent actions. This is also the case with the love of fame. In order to obtain it, many have attempted and accomplished things of the highest importance and honour to states and nations, as well as individuals; and which none would have undertaken, without this powerful stimulus. Thus, like the elements in the natural world, the passions are all necessary, and tend to correct each other in the mind of man. And with respect to their prevalence in individuals, it has pleased the Wise Author of all so to constitute things here below, that "partial evil" is, in this sense, "universal good;" because all conduce to the harmony and general order of the universe.

But a discovery of the nature and tendency of our passions, and of the means to govern them, is not the whole advantage arising from self-examination. We find implanted in our minds many virtuous and kind affections, which are overlooked in the hurry of life, and which is our duty and interest to cherish with the utmost care and diligence.

gence. These, by proper culture, will expand and bloom with increasing beauty and strength; and prove a source of happiness and comfort to ourselves and others. He who examines his own heart with attention, will see that it is not a sterile soil. The weeds and tares that frequently overspread it, shew its capability of producing the excellent fruits of virtue. The more he becomes acquainted with his weakness and his strength, the more he will see the necessity of exerting the one to assist the other; and, with an humble heart, contemplate his own dignity and importance, as a being formed for happiness and immortality.

When he exalts his views to the nobler powers of reason, understanding, and judgment, and examines their strength and extent, the prospect becomes more pleasing. He then sees that he is a compound of terrestrial and celestial natures; that his present imperfection arises from his connection with this world; a connection that will soon be broken; and that when released from the imprisonment and influence of these elements, he will shine forth in all his dignity as an immortal creature of God.

When

When he considers the force and extent of his intellectual powers, even while cloathed with this "mortal vesture of decay," and reflects on their more glorious expansion in the world of spirits, it will elevate his views; lead him to aspire after the perfection of his nature, and the true end of his being. He will see that his connection with God, the source of all perfection and felicity, is the only source of his happiness in time and throughout eternity. Although we are all the children of the Universal Parent by creation, there is a nearer relation in which we stand to him;—a relation indissoluble in its nature! We are emanations (if I may be allowed the term) of that celestial essence which can never be annihilated. This infinitely surpasses every other connection in its glorious consequences, and will remain a source of undecaying felicity when they shall be dissolved for ever.

Hence the man who *knows*, will, from a just sense of his dignity, *reverence* himself. Although sensible of human weakness, he will see his consequence, and feel his intellectual strength; and be conscious whence he derived it. He will not content himself with the amusements and acquisitions which terminate with time, and sense, and mortal

mortal life, but aspire after higher and higher degrees of refinement and perfection.

In proportion as he acquires the knowledge of himself, he will see the necessity of a still more excellent attainment, even the true knowledge of God:—a knowledge which is of all the most interesting and glorious.

We indeed behold the Deity in that beautiful display of his works which nature exhibits. The whole earth is full of his wonders. All things declare his praise. But the knowledge of him, as our preserver, our strength, and refuge in this world, and the source of eternal blessedness in the world and life that is to come, can only be attained by an humble reverent attention to the dictates of his spirit or grace, manifested in the consciences of all men, as their only sure guide and director in the way to his kingdom.

Whosoever follows this divine guide, this “word nigh in the heart,” will, at the close of his race here, be qualified to become a member of the church triumphant, and join his *elder brethren* in glory.

THE CELL OF CONTEMPLATION:

A V I S I O N.*

AT noon's approach, with toils of study tir'd,
 The town I left, and silently retir'd,
 Far from the scenes where Folly sits enshrin'd,
 And Dullness reigns—to heav'n-taught science blind;
 To where Favonius, with enliv'ning gale,
 Fann'd the gay bosom of a painted vale.
 To taste retirement's sweets, this place I sought,
 The haunt of solitude and pensive thought.
 Here, on a flow'ry bank reclin'd, I lay,
 Till gentle slumbers snatch'd my sense away:
 But Fancy still employ'd her mimic pow'rs,
 And sweetly pass'd the visionary hours.

Methought I enter'd Cam's delightful grove,
 Sacred to peace, to poesy, and love.
 With branches thick entwin'd, the tow'ring trees
 Wav'd high in air, and sported with the breeze.
 There Peace, with downy pinions, hover'd round,
 And Flora's offspring deck'd th' enamell'd ground.
 The birds sat warbling in the sylvan bow'rs;
 The bees, delighted, suck'd the fragrant flow'rs.

With

* Written in May, 1770.

With joy serene, beneath th' Elysian shade,
Along the moss-fring'd path I penfive stray'd,
Calm and compos'd, to serious thought inclin'd,
On those exalted scenes which elevate the mind.
At length the plummy songsters ceas'd to sing;
Mute was each tongue, and folded ev'ry wing:
No voice the air, no footsteps shook the ground;
For solemn silence reign'd the region round.
Hush'd were the winds, and scarce a fanning breeze
Dimpled the stream, or whisper'd through the trees:
All nature, now, with silent awe appear'd,
As though some present Deity she fear'd.
Onward I rov'd, till, near the winding way,
A broad expanse of purest water lay:
As crystal clear its glassy surface shone:
Its bank a GROTTO bore of shining stone.
No Doric columns swell'd to meet the eye,
Or skirting wings their gaudy pomp supply;
But plain and artless rose the humble pile,
Nor deck'd with cost, nor labour'd o'er with toil.
Anxious the unknown mansion to explore,
With cautious step I then approach'd the door,
And entrance sought: th' obedient hinges flew—
Within, a glorious prospect op'd in view.
Twelve marble pillars, beauteous to behold,
Richly emboss'd with emblematic gold,
The roof support; while round their shafts entwine
The creeping tendrils of a mimic vine.
Through the green foliage purple clusters glow,
In pendent pride, and grace each column's brow.

On these sustain'd, the ample roof appears
An azure sky, adorn'd with silver stars:
Full in the center Cynthia sheds her rays:
To right and left the golden planets blaze.
Two sanguine comets in their tracks appear,
Eccentric move, and shake their burning hair;
Compell'd th' extremes of heat and cold to trace,
Through the vast regions of unbounded space.
Around the walls, (of shining jasper fram'd,
And each fair stone that sacred writ* has nam'd)
Around the walls, CREATION was display'd,
A wond'rous scene! compos'd of light and shade—
A wondrous scene! the work of hands divine,
Where pow'r supreme and art immortal shine!
Here rolls old Chaos in the womb of night;
There, at divine commandment, springs the light:
The sacred light illumines the regions round:
Retiring waters leave the rising ground.
High heave the hills; deep sink the vales below,
Capacious beds, where rapid rivers flow.
Hence deep beneath the ground, in circuit wide,
Slowly meandering, creeps the parent tide,
And forms the springs which, bursting from her veins,
Refresh and fructify the thirsty plains.
Here the vast sea its "congregated waves,"
Majestic, rolls, and spacious islands laves:
There, from the hills, the woods spontaneous rise;
The tow'ring eagle there his pinions tries.

From

* Revelations.

From earth's green surface sprout the infant flow'rs,
Warm'd by the sun, and suckled by the show'rs.
Thick trees spring up, at once with blossoms crown'd,
And rip'ning fruit, low bending to the ground.
Through the sweet shades the stately lions stray,
And with the lambs in social dalliance play.
There with the greyhound trips the tim'rous hare,
And fondly sports—a stranger yet to fear.
Here rose each bird that cleaves the yielding skies,
Or through the groves with feeble pinions flies;
And shining swarms of insects, brisk and gay,
That bask and wanton in the blaze of day.
In one distinguish'd part, (a scene divine!)
The hills, the vales, the groves of Eden, shine!
These to describe, O sacred muse, inspire!
And grant one spark of thy celestial fire;
That fire which burns in Milton's deathless page,
Or glow'd superior in the royal sage!

Within the confines of the sacred mound,
Groves, lawns, and hills, diversify the ground.
Here lengthen'd vistas shed a pleasing gloom,
Where mingling shrubs and flow'rs promiscuous bloom,
There wood-crown'd hills in tow'ring grandeur rise,
And the scoop'd vale in Flora's vesture lies.
There Pison's pure transparent current glides,
And flow'rs immortal deck its verdant sides;
In solemn state, the swan, with downy breast,
And oary feet, and elevated crest,

Like some majestic galley, slowly moves,
 Or basks, delighted, in the reedy groves.
 Through the clear wave the scaly nations play,
 Flounce in the stream, or dart the pathless way.

Near, on the margin of the crystal flood,
 A form erect, with grace superior, stood;
 ADAM his name: To heav'n his eyes were turn'd,
 Where the bright sun with new-born splendor burn'd,
 With wonder struck, with pleasing transport fir'd,
 He gaz'd around, he worship'd, and admir'd.
 His eye o'er all the blissful region roves;
 With joy he hears the music of the groves;
 With joy beholds the new creation shine,
 And feels the fervent glow of extacy divine.
 At distance small, within a fragrant bow'r,
 Fresh from the hands of heav'n's creating pow'r,
 A form still more enrapt'ring rose to view,
 Which e'en from angels admiration drew.
 With beauty deck'd, and soft attractive grace,
 Enchanting sweetness smiling in her face,
 Breathing of heav'n, she trod th' enamell'd ground,
 Spotless and fair, with charms celestial crown'd.
 In her fresh cheek young health immortal glows;
 "There, blended, bloom the lily and the rose."
 Thus beauteously adorn'd, the fair one stood,
 The last and noblest workmanship of God.

Full in the center of the garden grew
 A stately tree, inviting to her view;

Its

Its pendent branches gently court the hand;
Its fruits acceptance silently demand:
Fair to behold, temptation dire it stood,
The test of man's obedience to his God.
Not far remote, upon the verdant ground,
The serpent rolls his spiry volumes round;
With undulating wreaths he glides along,
With artful wiles endu'd, and fraudulent tongue.
Still as he moves, his burnish'd scales unfold
The blended shades of azure, green, and gold:
Bright as a ruby, rose his flaming crest,
And Iris' bow shone radiant on his breast.

These wondrous scenes the artist had pourtray'd,
With peerless skill, in tints that never fade.
High over all, a lamp illum'd with light
The glorious scene, which shone with lustre bright.
Full in its blaze, upon an iv'ry throne,
Sat CONTEMPLATION.——

A lucid vesture did her limbs enfold;
Bright was the veil, adorn'd with stars of gold,
In thought profound she sat; while, in her soul,
Some theme important roll'd, or seem'd to roll.
On me, at length, she fix'd her piercing eye,
Bright as the star that gilds the ev'ning sky;
And, while benignant smiles her aspect grac'd,
In words like these the virgin me address'd:—

“ Whoe'er thou art, that seek'st this blest retreat,
“ (Of me, and happiness, the constant seat,)

“ Safe

" Safe mayst thou dwell in this retir'd abode,
 " And here admire the wondrous works of God.
 " The mind deprest'd with care here finds relief;
 " And joy will here resume the seat of grief,
 " No more shall sorrow cloud the smiling skies;
 " But, leaving earth, the kindling soul shall rise
 " To scenes more glorious, where celestial day
 " Shines forth refulgent with eternal ray.

" Here peace resides; here joy her tribute brings,
 " And pure devotion prunes her heav'n-born wings.
 " With these bright visions rising in her view,
 " Ancient as time, yet as the morning new,
 " Here the free soul prepares for sacred flight
 " To purer regions of immortal light.
 " Each op'ning prospect will the mind employ,
 " Till calm reflection ripens into joy.
 " In this blest mansion virtue makes abode,
 " And holds a sweet communion with her God.
 " Here, with delight, these wonders I explore,
 " And the Eternal Architect adore:—
 " Still let me rise to eloquence divine,
 " Till all my soul, *thou Source of all*, be thine;

" These scenes sublime, by gracious heav'n design'd
 " The best employ for an immortal mind,
 " Will cause all tumult in the soul to cease,
 " And tune discordant passions into peace;
 " A sweet composure in the breast will reign,
 " And all the joys of EDEN bloom again.

" Come

" Come then, and taste the bliss retirement brings;
" Leave the gay world and all terrestrial things:
" No lasting comfort man in these can gain;
" For soon the pleasure sickens into pain:
" Gay fleeting phantoms dance before his sight,
" And charms, illusive charms, his soul delight:
" Lull'd by imagination's magic pow'r,
" He, as the present, hopes the future, hour:
" But soon, ah! soon, the faithless visions fly;
" For nought is permanent beneath the sky.

" O youth, belov'd by heav'n, my words attend!
" And learn instruction from a faithful friend.
" When pleasure's Syrens tune th' harmonious lay,
" And tempt from virtue's sacred path to stray,
" To their enchanting voice refuse to yield,
" And shun the dangers of that flow'ry field,
" Where op'ning rose-buds crown the mantling bowl,
" And each soft passion captivates the soul.
" Though fair the region seems, and cloudless skies
" Smile chearful round, death still in ambush lies:
" In the luxurious banquet he resides,
" And for himself a new repast provides.

" Avoid the mis'ries which from folly spring;
" Beware of guilty pleasure's hidden sting:
" Let reason reign triumphant in thy soul;
" Let ev'ry passion own her just controul:
" To her superior law obedience yield,
" And guard thy breast with virtue's sacred shield.

" Let

“ Let wisdom’s wreaths around thy temples twine ;
“ Enrich thy mind with ev’ry grace divine.
“ In this retreat for ever seek to dwell ;
“ Here, here, in peace, erect thy humble cell.
“ With thee I’ll range creation’s wonders o’er ;
“ Trace science’ hallow’d walks, and ancient lore :
“ We’ll hold sweet converse with the honour’d dead,
“ From Plato, through the line illustrious, led ;
“ Think as they thought, and catch their sacred fire ;
“ Rise on their wings, and, as we rise, admire !
“ Then shall succeeding years thy bliss improve,
“ And bloom with fruits of happiness and love,
“ Till time shall end, and, mournful at thy bier,
“ Friendship shall silent stand, and drop the tender tear :
“ And when from these terrestrial regions fled ;—
“ When laid in dust, and number’d with the dead ;—
“ In those bright mansions, where, with purer ray,
“ Beams forth the lustre of a perfect day,
“ Shall thy free soul, exalted and refin’d,
“ For ever contemplate th’ Eternal Mind.”

ON THE PLEASURE AND IMPROVE-
MENT ARISING FROM STUDYING
THE WORKS OF NATURE.

“ The heav’n-taught Heart, the Thought refin’d and clear
“ To sacred Solitude, to Goodness dear,
“ At Wisdom’s beck has ever sought the shade,
“ Where unapproach’d Delight in Science play’d;
“ Where Truth extends her disentangled clue,
“ And all her richest treasures spreads to view;
“ Where Judgment holds with steady hand the scales,
“ In undisturb’d repose from passion’s gales.”

Epistle to Lord Orrery.

THE infinite variety, and beauty, of the works
of Nature have afforded subjects of pleasing
admiration in all ages and nations. The tongues
and the pens of philosophers and poets have often
celebrated them in all the luxuriance of descrip-
tion and rhapsody.

Hence the *Spring* has been an unfailing subject
for the muse, who has painted its numerous beau-
ties in all the glowing tints of poetical imagery.

G g

Few

Few there are, who can behold this sweet renovation of nature, without feeling that animating warmth, which gives beauty, vigour, and sprightliness, to the whole visible creation.

In this, her annual infancy, Nature appears every moment ripening into perfection. Every hour protrudes a bud; every morning unfolds a blossom. The fields, where late nothing appeared but sterility, are now clothed with enlivening verdure, and enamelled with a thousand flowers. The newly-arrayed groves wave gently with the breeze; the mountains are crowned with beauty, and the "valleys laugh and sing."

"The time of the singing of birds is now come." The general joy is proclaimed, through every grove and thicket, in the voice of melody. All beings feel, and seem to exult in, the cheering influence. The invigorating warmth of the sun gives new life and beauty to every production. The innumerable inhabitants of the earth, the air, and the waters—the insects of a thousand forms and hues, that bask and sport in the meridian ray, all enjoy their allotted span of time, and portion of happiness. In the great temple of the universe each class has its proper destination; and from each,

each, the unceasing voice of praise ascends to the Divine Author and Source of Universal Being.

And in this general chorus, shall *man* alone withhold his tribute of admiration and praise?—Man, who is placed at the head of the visible creation, and endued with faculties capable of everlasting improvement, exertion, and enjoyment—shall *he* be wanting in that gratitude which from him is peculiarly due to the author of his existence?

Those regions of matter with which we are surrounded open a sublime field for enquiry and contemplation: and surely there is nothing which Divine Wisdom thought proper to create, that is beneath the attention of man. This is a consideration very necessary for those who seem to despise, and treat with a contemptuous neglect, many parts of the Creator's works, because they have neither sufficient taste or capacities to examine and discover their beauty or usefulness.

Every particle of matter, every blade of grass, every flower, and every insect that inhabits them, furnish ample proof of the existence of a Supreme Cause, and administer pleasure to the intelligent

mind. When we view the admirable structure of plants and animals; the almost infinite number of their fibres and vessels; the apt disposition of each to the other, and the various changes they undergo in their progress to maturity; we are charmed with the beauty, order, and symmetry, which is so conspicuous in their frame. Even those living organized atoms (if I may be allowed the term) which the microscope has brought to our view, are infinitely more surprising and curious in their frame than the finest pieces of mechanism that human art ever invented.

Every insect that flutters in the meridian ray, every reptile that creeps the earth, or inhabits the waters, is happy in its sphere, and contributes its share to the happiness and perfection of the whole.

If we descend to the vegetable, mineral, and fossil kingdoms, the same divine wisdom appears in their formation and structure. Even those plants and pebbles which are daily trodden upon, and deemed contemptible by human ignorance and pride, contain properties unknown to the most sagacious philosopher. It has become a kind of fashion for uncultivated and incurious minds to despise, and affect a kind of contempt for, those
species

species of animate, as well as inanimate beings, from which they receive no immediate advantage or pleasure. Hence the naturalist, the curious enquirer into the works of Deity, often meets the scoff of ignorance and the sneer of folly. But these come generally from men who are either mere sensualists, or enthusiasts; or who worship no deity but gold, or whose abilities are circumscribed within a narrow compass. But as a wise man pays little regard to vulgar prejudices, he will not be deterred from his pursuits by vulgar censures. He will proceed in his enquiries into the works of nature, and find therein a degree of satisfaction which those who censure him can never experience.

The more accurately we examine the various classes of beings around us, the more we shall discover of their usefulness and subserviency to the general beauty, order, and happiness of the whole. If we contemplate them with a philosophic eye, we shall find their enjoyments and capacities, their stations and their wants, nicely adapted to each other. And if we observe the almost imperceptible gradations by which they rise one above another, from inert matter up to man, here will be a boundless field of entertainment. The precise
line

line which divides the animal and vegetable kingdoms, has not yet perhaps been drawn.

I have not had the opportunity for making nice disquisitions, which many others have been favoured with; but am inclined to believe, that many marine and aquatic productions, which have hitherto been deemed vegetables, are really animals. Of this number, a variety of experiments and much observation have convinced me, are several of the species which Dellinius has ranked in the class of *Conserua Mosses*. We see every day new species of polypi discovered on aquatic plants and on marine bodies. Perhaps a careful attention to the subject may furnish us with greater certainty, and enable us to ascertain the exact point where the principles of animal and vegetable life meet each other.

But not to dwell longer on disquisitions so curious, most men have power and opportunity to explore enough of nature's works, to increase their present satisfaction, and lead them to the consideration of their Divine Original. Throughout the whole they will see the most extensive munificence connected with the nicest œconomy. Nothing is left unfinished; nothing is redundant. All appear

pear to have been created in "number, weight, "and measure," and afford the most striking proofs of a skill that is divine, and a power that is boundless as the theatre of space in which it is exerted.

If we exalt our views to the more grand and noble parts of Nature, and contemplate the sun, moon, and stars, on the principles of true philosophy, we are lost in admiration. The immense magnitude of these bodies, the regularity and rapidity of their motions, and the inconceivable extent of space through which they move, are subjects too vast for our comprehension. We are lost in the immensity of the theme, and all our ambition is humbled.

To minds happily disengaged from the influence of lower attractions, the study of nature, and the contemplation of its Author in his glorious works, is a pleasing and instructive employment. There is not a bud that expands its foliage, or a flower that breathes its sweets, or displays its beauty, but afford them instruction and delight. They will feel the genial influence of that Divine Power which is—

“Chang’d

“ Chang’d through all, and yet in all the same,
Great in the earth as in th’ ethereal frame,
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glow in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,
Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent.
Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,
As full, as perfect, in an hair as heart;
As full, as perfect, in vile man that mourns,
As the rapt Seraph that adores and burns:
To him, no high, no low, no great, no small,
He fills, he bounds, connects, and equals all.”

Exalted above vulgar prejudices, and those mists of sensuality, which envelope the superficial, or depraved mind, the wise and good man inhabits a serener region, and is illumined by a stronger light: the man who is properly humbled by a sense of his weakness, and constant dependance on Providence for preservation, is sometimes apt to consider himself as beneath the notice of an infinite and all-perfect being. Considered as an individual, detached from the vast assemblage of existence, he is, in his own estimation at least, scarcely distinguished in the immensity of God’s works. But the prospect of innumerable beings, all under the immediate care and protection of Divine Omnipotence, will tend to banish every distrustful thought, and excite in his mind the most

most cheering and delightful considerations. He sees that there is not any class of sensitive existence excluded from the notice of the Universal Parent. When he reflects on the dignity of his intellectual essence, and the nature of that relation which must eternally subsist between an immortal spirit and its author, he will be encouraged to look up with humble confidence to the source of his being.

Thus to rise from the creatures to the Creator is the great moral use I wish to inculcate, in recommending the attention of my readers to the works of Nature. Let them be as the steps of that ladder, by which we may ascend in contemplation, from earth to heaven. We see all the beings around us arise gradually to the perfection of their nature, and then decline and perish. Uncertainty and decay is the universal inscription they bear. A continual revolution takes place according to the eternal order of things. Thus it doubtless is with systems and worlds, as well as with the inhabitants and productions of this planet. The most beautiful flowers soon fade, and droop, and die. This is also the case with man: his days are uncertain as the passing breeze. This hour he glows in the blush of health and

H h

vigour;

vigour; but to-morrow he may be consigned to an unchangeable dwelling. At all events, the dissolution of his mortal fabric approaches with hasty advances and unavoidable certainty. The period is near at hand when all that now delights him will delight him no more. He must bid adieu to this world, and be disunited from its most endearing connections for ever. He must pass the dreary valley of death without a companion to cheer its gloom. He must stand singly and alone in the world of spirits, where there are none of the pleasures of time and sense to fill up the dreadful vacuity of an unimproved mind. The more his affections and desires have been sublimated and refined while on earth, the better qualified he will be for that superior enjoyment which is the inestimable portion of the "just made perfect". For I think it is not unphilosophical to suppose, that the soul on its separation from the body will carry the same desires and affections, which principally governed it here, into its new state of existence. Hence it follows, that it can experience no joy in eternity but what had in some degree been experienced by it while on earth. If its affections were wholly centered on the objects of this world, if they have not been exercised on things suited to the nature of an intellectual being, it will have no
object

object to fix them upon in the life that is to come. But if while here, its desires and affections were principally fixed on things of a celestial nature, it will then find an eternal source of consolation and joy; and from an enlarged comprehension of the Divine attributes, join in the solemn ascription of, "How glorious are thy works, O God! "In wisdom hast thou created them all!"

THE FACULTIES AND POWERS OF
THE SOUL EVIDENCES OF ITS IM-
MORTALITY.

“——Whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,
“ This longing after immortality.”

ADDISON.

THE human soul is a subject which has been treated of by many writers, some of whom have only bewildered themselves and their readers in the intricate mazes of metaphysical speculation, while they have vainly attempted to explain its essence, and the manner of its connection with the body.

But as these are points too abstruse in their nature for the most refined human abilities to ascertain, or even to comprehend clearly, I shall confine my present thoughts to the consideration of the faculties and powers of the soul, which I think evidently evince its immortality.

If

If we turn our attention to what passes in our own minds, we shall perceive that we have a reasoning, thinking faculty, distinct from, and apparently independent of, matter. We feel a consciousness of something within us superior in its nature, that is connected with, and the inhabitant of this material body. We also find, that this intellectual principle is ever active in the pursuit of, and capable of receiving, additional accessions of knowledge.

By this principle man is distinguished from the lower orders of animals, and maintains a superiority over them in the scale of existence. It has indeed been alledged, and very justly, that divers of the faculties and powers of the human soul such as memory, judgment, contrivance, and design, are possessed by various classes in the animal world. In many species of them there seems to be a kind of reasoning, and drawing consequences from some settled principles. It has therefore been urged, that if these powers were proofs of immortality in the human soul, they must operate equally to prove brutes immortal. The supposed absurdity of this supposition has been much dwelt upon by the advocates of infidelity, to weaken the belief of the immortality of the human soul. But
although

although I think a good mind will feel no reluctance in admitting it possible for brutes to exist in some future state and happier mode of being, it does not appear to me a necessary consequence of the powers they possess.

It is not evident to me, that the inferior orders of living creatures are furnished with powers or capacities of acquiring any other knowledge than is necessary for their immediate preservation. Those which approach nearest to the human species seem to be capable of little more than a bare imitation of the common actions of mankind. These they frequently repeat without any apparent design, and perhaps merely from the unseen influence of some extraneous cause. They soon arrive at that point of perfection which they never pass, but from which they gradually decline as they approach their end.

But this is not the case with man: by the exercise of his intellectual powers he is capable of attaining new acquisitions of knowledge to the end of life; or at least till the decay of his corporeal organs prevents it. His pleasures, his desires, are not confined to the mere accommodation of the body, as is the case with inferior animals. The
superior

superior delight of which his soul is capable, and that thirst after knowledge which nothing in this world can fully satisfy, are ample proofs of his divine origin, and point out, with the strongest probability, the immortality of his intellectual nature.

The mind which is not enslaved by its passions is incessantly aspiring after new accessions of wisdom. It finds those things which now surround it, insufficient to satisfy its desires, and therefore exerts its faculties in quest of new objects for investigation. But even nature itself is too narrow a field for its views. Hence it ascends in idea, and contemplates the more glorious scenes of the intellectual world. Here and here only it finds that inexhaustible fund, which can satisfy its most enlarged desires, and furnish subjects for the employment of its most noble and capacious powers. It sees the excellence and order of the Divine attributes, and in these divine contemplations partakes of the joys in Angelic beings.

This is the central point, to which a mind, disengaged from these lower attractions, naturally tends, and here only it can enjoy the most refined delight. But such is the nature of our state while surrounded with, and affected by, these elements,
that

that even this intellectual happiness can be but imperfectly enjoyed. Can it therefore be imagined, on any reasonable ground, that the Great Author of our being would endue us with faculties, powers, and desires so much superior, to the enjoyments of this life, had he not graciously designed us for one that is infinitely superior. If this is not admitted, those intellectual powers will appear to have been given only to tantalize us with prospects unattainable, and with hopes and desires which can never be gratified.

Can it be reasonably imagined, that beings capable of perceptions not arising from their animal frame, and in which no instrumental influence can have any share—perceptions which all nature cannot furnish, and which are the pure abstract reasonings of the soul;—can it, I say, be imagined, that beings thus endowed, thus dignified and placed in the scale of existence, perhaps but “a little lower than the angels,” were formed for no higher purpose,

“Than just to look about them, and to die.”

It appears to me an undoubted truth, (and I wish ever to indulge the pleasing idea) that as the human soul is of divine origin, it stands in indissoluble

luble relation to the source of its existence, and was formed to sustain glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life.

All that this world can afford is insufficient to fill the capacities of the mind, or to administer that happiness which it is ever seeking to obtain. The intellectual eye and ear can neither see, hear, nor at present comprehend, the glorious scenes of eternity. Far better, therefore, had it been for us, if our perceptions had been limited to this world, if the present life were to terminate our existence. What greater punishment can be inflicted on any being, than to tantalize it with strong desires that can never be accomplished, and hopes and expectations which must quickly end in total disappointment? Can such a constitution and appointment be the work of a being permanently and inherently good? Can he delight thus to deceive, and render his creatures unhappy? No, surely. Banned for ever from the human mind be the degrading, the impious idea.

There must, in the nature of things, be a future state, in which the soul may ultimately enjoy the full fruition of its most exalted hopes;—a state wherein those noble faculties and powers, which are

now fettered and imprisoned within the walls of flesh, will be set free, and for ever expand with immortal vigour.

There is nothing which, in seasons of affliction, or at the painful evening of life, can afford so much comfort to the soul, as a steady belief of its future existence in a happier state. It alleviates the keenest of human woes, and illumines the dark "valley of the shadow of death." There is no reflection which, when we take a final adieu of those we most love, affords a consolation equal to this,—that they are only gone before us to happiness, and that we shall meet again in a better country, never more to be separated,

I have therefore ever considered those men, who in the pride, but without the wisdom of philosophy, have attempted to deprive us of this most excellent hope and comfort, by suggesting doubts, of, or endeavouring to refute the doctrine of the soul's immortality, as the greatest enemies to the cause of religion, virtue, and happiness. They endeavour to cast a gloom over our brightest prospects, to degrade their species, and to deprive us of all that is most desirable at a season when we want every consolation. It will be granted, that
their

their system, if true, excludes all fears respecting our state hereafter; but it also excludes every pleasing idea, every hope and delightful prospect of future bliss and enjoyment. Whether the folly or the impiety of such men be greatest, is not easy to determine; but their writings ought to be rejected and despised by every man who is conscious of his own dignity as a reasonable being. For a wiser than they has told us (and may we ever receive it as a most joyful truth) that "God created man to be immortal, and made him to be an image of his own eternity."

ON THE MISERIES TO WHICH HUMAN
LIFE IS INCIDENT.

“ So short a space, the light of heav’n to view,
“ So short a space, and full of sorrow too.”

POPE’S HOMER.

“ **F**EW and evil have been the days of the
“ years of my pilgrimage,” was the exclamation of the good old Patriarch, on a review of his life; and there are few among his successors, who have not, at times, had cause to bewail their own in the same mournful language. Every one has more or less experienced affliction to be a part of the lot assigned him in this world. Hence the human mind, when under its pressure, is apt to sink into despondency; and, instead of encountering the evils of life with a manly fortitude, resign itself a voluntary victim not only to real, but imaginary affliction.

When the ideas of approaching distress thicken around us, the power of imagination magnifies every

every object, and deepens the scenery of woe. Ideal sorrows then affect us as though they were real, and the terrors of anticipation are no less poignant than those of present calamity. We lose the power of resistance, and sink beneath them. This appears to be one of the weaknesses inseparable from human nature. The wise and the valiant, as well as the ignorant and pusillanimous, are at times affected by it. To guard against this weakness, by every possible effort which reason and religion can assist us to make, is the duty and interest of all men. To multiply the evils of life by tamely resigning ourselves to their dominion; to neglect those means by which we may escape them, or lessen their weight, and at the same time to bewail our lot in the language of discontent, is absurd and criminal.

Although "it is not for human lips to taste
"the cup of pure joy," it is still in our power
to diminish, as well as increase, the weight and influence of affliction. The mind that expatiates over life's checquered scene only in search of disagreeable objects, and claims a share in every calamity that surrounds it, may easily find subjects of disquietude that will disturb its repose. But such are the destroyers of their own peace,
by

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by voluntarily laying the foundation of their own sorrows. The evils that are "afloat on the stream of time," may or may not encounter us in our passage: the intervention of a thousand objects may either screen us from the danger, or divert their course into a different direction. When we add to the real miseries of life, by anticipating those which only hover at a distance, and may never reach us;—when we resign ourselves victims to the imaginary phantoms which fear and fancy have generated, we descend from the dignity of reasonable beings, and become rather the objects of contempt than commiseration.

Many of the afflictions whereof we complain, are occasioned by the imprudent indulgence of curiosity. The solicitude of the human mind to draw aside the curtain, and pry into its future allotment in life, is at once the source of much pain as well as pleasure. When we attempt to form ideas of what the next day, month, or year, may bring forth, we are often involved in doubt and uncertainty. The gay and the volatile form schemes of ideal felicity, which frequently end in disappointment. The gloomy, and those of a melancholy complexion, who are more under the influence

influence of fear than of hope, generally presage a series of afflictive events, the expectation of which embitters the present hour, and renders existence painful. Thus are men deluded in the judgment they form of the future; and apprehensions, inimical to human happiness, arise respecting events, which from their remoteness cannot be discriminated with precision, or determined with certainty. Their repining proceeds from discontent, and self-deception; and they are themselves the authors of that very infelicity, which from age to age they have deplored in the wailings of mournful declamation.

The inimitable STERNE has pointed out the folly of such spleenetic and gloomy minds, in the finest vein of wit and satire, where he delineates the character of a late historian under that of *Smelfungus*.

But although much of the unhappiness complained of by discontented minds is either ideal, or self-inflicted, yet all men meet with real sorrows, which neither wisdom nor prudence can prevent or avoid. The rich, the poor, the learned, and illiterate, equally proclaim, and perhaps equally feel, its influence. The Prince,
although

although surrounded with the pomp of royalty, is as vulnerable to the shafts of woe as the peasant. The progress of affliction is not impeded by the formality of surrounding centinels;—it passes the guarded gates, and approaches the couch of Majesty.

From the connection we have with, and the relation we stand in to, the various classes of beings around us, arise most of our sorrows as well as joys. Nothing which in its nature is subject to change can be a foundation whereon to erect the fabric of lasting happiness. As

“ Day follows at the heels of day

“ And moons increase to their decay,”

every hour teems with events productive of the joy that sweetens, and the evil that embitters, life. Some pleasing connections are formed; others are dissolved; and the breeze that wafts delight to one man, chases it from another. Idle therefore is the hope, vain is the expectation, of escaping affliction in every of its innumerable forms. But from this consideration, let the mind be excited to enquire how it may best sustain the shocks “that flesh is heir to;” support the evils it cannot shun, and most easily alleviate them.

As

As every blessing decreases in its estimated value, when we imagine ourselves entitled to a larger proportion than we enjoy, the acuteness of present pain is best alleviated by reflecting that a still greater degree of it might have been inflicted. It is by the inversion of that fallacy which gives birth to imaginary joy, that our ideal miseries are created, and our real ones magnified. By reversing the perspective, the prospect will brighten, and those things which appeared the most to obstruct our felicity, will be often found blessings in disguise, and indispensibly necessary to its final completion.

“ The ways of Heav’n are dark and intricate,
“ Perplex’d with mazes, and involv’d in error,”

is a sentiment, which Addison has with great propriety put into the mouth of a hero whose mind the sacred light of the gospel had not illumined. Equally mysterious do the ways of Providence appear to those, in later ages, whose views are obscured by the mists of sensuality, and confined to this little scene of things. But the mind which is strengthened by the vigorous exercise of its own powers, and enlightened by that wisdom which is divine, sees order, beauty, harmony, and perfection, throughout the divine œconomy.—

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When

When thus viewed, the various afflictions we pass through will appear wisely adapted to beings who are in a state of probation, and only on their way to that better country where unmixed happiness is known.

Man, being a compound of two natures, *Flesh* and *Spirit*, the intellectual part of his frame is liable to suffer by the improper indulgence of his animal passions. Hence, were he permitted to pursue the objects of his desire, and gratify his sensual appetites without controul; did not affliction awaken him to sense and recollection, and lead him to consider the nature and end of his being, he would soon rush into irretrievable ruin, and forget that this is not the place of his rest. But when he sees the objects of his desire and hope snatched away, and blasted in the hour of possession and enjoyment, his dependance on mutable things is weakened; his attention is recalled to its proper center, and he is led to the contemplation of superior objects. He will see, that all is vanity beneath the sun;—that in this life he is unavoidably subject to affliction and disappointment, and be led to look for an exemption from every disquietude in that only which is to come.

When

When we trace the evils of life, to their source, they will often appear to be the just consequence of our own misconduct, and the kind correction of the Great Parent and Friend of man, intended only to remain till the disorder it was designed to cure, is removed. Thus, to the virtuous mind, affliction is a medicine administered by the Divine Physician, to prevent some greater evil, or permitted for its further refinement, and more perfect establishment, in the way that is everlasting. However gloomy the scene, or thorny the path they have to tread, such may solace themselves with this comfortable reflection, that they are still under the gracious notice of Him,

“ Whose eye pervades the darkness as the day,”

* * * * *

And,

“ Who sees with equal eye, as lord of all,

“ A hero perish, or a sparrow fall.”

Though the sons of virtue may suffer affliction, and for a while be “ punished in the sight of “ men,” their “ hope is full of immortality.”

The Divine Veracity hath promised, that every dispensation, whether of his *rod* or his *staff*, shall ultimately tend to the completion of their happiness, and finally work out for them “ a far more ex-

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“ceeding and eternal weight of glory.” If they pass through a furnace of affliction, and (to apply the sublime metaphor of Ezekiel) “walk up and “down in the midst of stones of fire,” they may safely repose their confidence in that arm which is omnipotent and everlasting; and, by keeping in view the future glorious recompence, rise superior to adversity, and anticipate with joy their inestimable portion in the riches of eternity.

“Then farewell NIGHT! of darkness now no more;
“Joy breaks; shines, triumphs; ’tis eternal day.”

YOUNG.

A LETTER FROM EUSEBIUS TO TWO
OF HIS YOUNG PUPILS,

WHO, FROM A PRIVATE EDUCATION, WERE JUST
RETURNED HOME TO THEIR PARENTS.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,

YOUR respectful and kind epistle, dated from Yarmouth, reached me a few days since. That sensibility and amiable disposition which appear to have influenced your minds at the time of your writing it, afforded me peculiar pleasure. It excited in me the warmest sensations of disinterested joy, to observe that my poor but earnest endeavours to cherish the dawning virtues in your breasts had not proved a fruitless labour. As you request my communicating some directions relative to your future conduct, I now undertake the pleasing task of furnishing some hints which I hope may prove useful in the succeeding scenes of your lives.

I am

I am more encouraged to this undertaking, from knowing that you possess an inclination to receive and profit by instruction, than from any consciousness of my own abilities to give it with propriety: but as I have in some degree experienced the advantages resulting from an attention to what I shall recommend, I hope you will not consider it as beneath your notice. You are blessed with capacities superior to the common rank, and therefore more will be expected at your hands. With such advantages, you may stand the conspicuous ornaments of society, and become a blessing to those around you.

You are now entering that part of life, in which impressions made on the mind, whether of good or evil, truth or error, are most lasting. Much care and caution is therefore requisite to gain a foundation whereon you may build with security, and escape the numerous dangers that surround the unwary.

The first things necessary to be strongly inculcated in your minds, are, the steady belief that you are at all times under the immediate notice of a self-existent, righteous, and omniscient God, in whose sight every evil disposition and action is offensive:—

offensive:—That, from the most glorious motives of unmixed benevolence, he has formed you, and all the rest of his rational creation, for sustaining degrees of happiness proportioned to their nature and station, both in time and in eternity:—That he has graciously afforded to every individual such a portion of grace, light, and knowledge, as is necessary for the attainment of that desirable and happy end:—And also that he requires of all men a conduct corresponding to his laws, to the measure of grace received, and the relation they stand to him and to their fellow-creatures.

From a well-grounded conviction and belief of these important truths—truths which constitute the only true foundation of religion and moral virtue,—you will be best able to fulfil the obligations of duty to the One Supreme Cause, and to mankind in general.

With regard to particular systems of faith or modes of worship, I pretend not to direct your choice. Authority over conscience is the unalienable prerogative of the Deity. With respect to man, it ought ever to remain perfectly free. If therefore there be any thing in that system of faith or mode of worship wherein you have been
educated,

educated; which, after mature consideration, occasions you to be dissatisfied with it, I would by no means dissuade you from a serious search after truth in any other; but rather recommend you to practise the Apostle's advice, "prove all things, and hold fast to that which is good."

Religion is a serious thing, and of infinite importance. It depends not on forms or creeds; but the spirit of it may exist amidst a variety of them. I am not so much of a bigot as to suppose truth confined to any system of religion; or that even the most irrational is wholly founded in error. As error, in some of its innumerable forms, has found its way into all the various societies that profess christianity, I doubt not but each possesses a portion of truth, although its light may be nearly eclipsed by the gross darkness with which in some it is enshrouded.

But as we have no dominion over the consciences of one another, censure not their mistakes with severity; but rather let love, meekness, and christian charity, cover the weakness and frailty of those who may appear to deviate from the true mode of worship. Ever bear in mind, that sincerity is always acceptable to Him who looketh
at

at the heart; and that of every name, society, and class, the man who acts agreeably to the dictates of conscience in his own breast, and to that knowledge which he has received, will experience the mercy and favour of his Creator and Judge at the last day.

In all your researches after truth, lay aside every bias, and be guided by the evidence arising from a free and honest exercise of that reason and understanding which God has given you. These, when rightly used, are, through the Divine assistance, capable of leading you to the knowledge of himself, and of shewing you what is the sum and substance of your duty. Be not, through the prejudice of education, the force of habit in others, or the influence of their example, led to entertain any sentiment inconsistent with the plain dictates of reason, or injurious to the sacred character of him who is the center of all excellence and perfection, and the fountain of immutable wisdom, goodness, and truth.

Give not place to any thought respecting him, or his divine and moral attributes, which conveys the least idea of imperfection. Be ever cautious to avoid entertaining a notion that he is a capri-

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cious,

cious, variable, and revengeful being, or that his mercy and goodness is restricted to any part of mankind. Sentiments of this nature, when admitted, tend to inspire the mind with uncharitableness towards such as they look upon to be less in God's favour than others, and to exclude that benevolence of sentiment and conduct which is the distinguishing excellence of the real christian.

A consciousness of the purity and authority of the Divine laws, and a filial fear of offending him who is your Creator, Preserver, and Judge, are the best preservatives against evil: and an humble reverent enquiry into, and observance of those laws is the most excellent wisdom.

Having thus attempted to point out a foundation whereon to ground the most essential part of your belief and subsequent conduct, permit me to add a few remarks of a more particular nature, which may not be wholly unworthy your attention.

Your rank in life will doubtless subject you to greater dangers than those are incident to who fill a lower station; and cast many temptations in your way, to which they are not liable. Placed among those,

those, who from having it in their power to indulge every wish, to gratify every passion, are led into much intemperance, you will doubtless be often solicited to join them in their follies, and excess. You will be strongly excited to lay the reins of sober reason on the neck of your passions, to give full scope to the fallacious joys of guilty dissipation, and to fly with every shifting gale on the wings of vanity. Pleasure, in all her varieties, will allure you from the path that leads to Virtue's temple, and Sophistry, with her innumerable wiles, will endeavour to pervert the right exercise of your reason. The Circean cup will be often presented, but remember the consequence of tasting it is inebriation.

Amidst these dangers, recollect and apply the alone means of safety. Remember, that here is a glorious opportunity for you to discover the highest prudence and wisdom. "When sinners entice thee, consent thou not," was the advice of the wisest amongst men. By withstanding the numerous solicitations to evil which may sometimes beset you on every hand, and steadily governing your conduct by the rules of sobriety, temperance, and religion, you will sustain the most estimable of all characters, and become shining

examples to those around you. Nor will the advantage center wholly in yourselves. You will be the happy means of preventing evil in others, who seeing your stability and perseverance in the ways of virtue, may be led to imitate your example. Hence you will experience that peace and complacency of mind, which, as the poet finely observes,

“——Nothing earthly gives, or can destroy,

“The soul’s calm sunshine, and the heart-felt joy.”

I mean not that you should live the life of a recluse, or appear with the formal grimace of monastic austerity. This is oftener the effect of spleen and ill-nature, than of piety. There is nothing in this world we are commanded by the Deity to be separated from, but its vices and follies, and that spirit which gives them birth. You need not neglect to enjoy with temperance and moderation any of those pleasures and amusements which are not forbidden by reason. And the man who thinks those pleasures, so enjoyed, unlawful, pays but an ill compliment to that Great and Good Being, who has bountifully scattered them in the path of life, to alleviate its cares and troubles, and increase our present happiness.

The

The path of virtue lies between the two extremes of unrestrained indulgence and self-inflicted austerity; equally remote from the rigour of the zealot, and unbounded dissipation of the licentious libertine. This path we may tread with safety: it is best adapted to our happiness in this life, and will lead us through the uncertainties of time to a glorious immortality.

Minds exalted above the common level, who reflect on the dignity of their nature, and the important end of their being, must naturally look down on many of the fashionable follies and amusements in this age of false-refinement, with a mixture of pity and contempt. Like bubbles in the sun-beams, they may shine, but, like bubbles, they are unsubstantial. A breath of air will break, or waft them away for ever. To such minds the full bowl, the table of excess, the licentious scenes of wantonness, and empty trifling amusements, which engage the common herd, will justly appear unlawful, and far beneath their notice.

A well-cultivated mind can never want employment. In the hours of relaxation from necessary business, nature presents a rich field, which it may explore with profit and delight:—a field,
wherein

wherein the sacred footsteps of Omnipotence are every where seen, and his wisdom and goodness is diversified without end. Here we may behold his works with that pleasing admiration and reverence which is a species of humble worship, ever acceptable in his sight.

From a knowledge of your inclination for reading, I apprehend you will expect some direction respecting your studies and choice of books. In the first place, permit me earnestly to recommend a diligent and attentive study of the scriptures as the best compositions in the world. They abound with the most important instruction relative to your moral, social, and religious duties; and will furnish entertainment of almost every kind that a wise man esteems most valuable.

They transmit to us the only genuine account we have of the most remarkable events previous to the invention of letters. In a historical and chronological light, they are highly valuable. They contain the best system of ethicks that have yet appeared in the world. They are interspersed with the finest graces of poetry, the most masterly strokes of rhetoric, and pathetic touches of sacred eloquence.

With

With respect to other writings, the produce of human learning and genius, there is a great variety to employ your leisure hours. But among the innumerable volumes that fill our libraries, there are but few worth reading with attention. Among these few it is a point of too much delicacy for me to determine which are the best. I shall therefore only point out some which have afforded me much pleasure, most of which are very justly admired by the intelligent part of mankind. I mean not however any oblique reflection on many other excellent writers, by particularly recommending the following, on religious and moral subjects, viz. Tillotson, Chillingworth, Bates, Wichcot, Seed, Law, Scott, Synge, Clarke, Foster, Addison, Locke, Hoadley, Atterbury, Sherlock, South, Abernethy, Young, Leland, Mural, Cambray, Barclay, Penn; and, of later writers, Blair, Carr, Franklin, Duché, Fordyce, Beattie, Hartley, and particularly the works of the late learned and truly pious Bishop Wilson, just published; a Prelate whose writings approach perhaps as near to Apostolical purity as any human compositions whatsoever.

You will perhaps wonder that I recommend Barclay, and Penn, as they were Quakers; but
suffer

suffer not popular prejudice to bias your judgment, or prevent your reading their works with the attention they deserve. They were men of great virtue, learning, and abilities; and their names will be remembered with honour through many generations. However singular their opinions might be with respect to forms, ceremonies, and some other things of little importance in religion, their writings are in general strictly conformable to the doctrines of Christ and his Apostles. They seem to have stripped religion of many things which superstition and priest-craft had artfully or ignorantly blended with it, and reduced it nearer to the original standard of primitive Christianity than most other writers.

With regard to the arts and sciences, your studies therein have rendered you sufficiently acquainted with books of that kind to direct your own choice.

As to writings which only serve for amusement, to give you a knowledge of the world, or to refine your taste, it is difficult to advise. Many of them are very superficial; many others contain a mixture injurious to morality, which too often renders them the means of corrupting the heart, while they

they improve the head and amuse the fancy. Of this kind are most of the plays and novels which engross so large a portion of the time of our fashionable and speculative youth. There are, however, many exceptions to this censure.

In the poetical line, Homer, Virgil, Horace, Juvenal, Tasso, Lucan, Persius, Metastasio; and, amongst the moderns, Spenser, Shakespeare, Waller, Prior, Cowley, Milton, Thompson, Pope, Dryden, Young, Broome, Mason, Smart, Gay, Wharton, Dyer, Armstrong, Akenfide, Gray, Goldsmith, Langhorne, Doddsley, Jones, Carter, Aikin, and Moore, will furnish a fund of instructive and pleasing entertainment.

In prose, the best translations of the classics, Addison, Swift, Steele, Melmoth, Cambray, Rollin, Buffon, Johnson, Hawkesworth, Richardson, Fielding, Colman, Thornton, Lyttleton, Robertson, Gibbons, Hurd, Ferguson, Smith, Brooke, Goldsmith, Jennings, Sterne, Pennant, Priestley, Webb, Walpole, Kaimes, and many others, will afford an agreeable employment, in the hours of relaxation from higher studies.

But, above all, study the Book of Nature; the rest are but transcripts—here is the original. In her ample pages there is an infinite variety, capable of employing the most active mind, and of gratifying most of its desires. It is an exhaustless treasury, from which the diligent searcher after knowledge may incessantly draw instruction and delight. In the works of nature, we perceive the immediate traces of the finger of Deity. Wisdom is stamped upon them, and they are diversified without end. When you explore these living volumes, let reverence cover your minds: consider them as the medium by which you may ascend to the still more sublime and delightful contemplation of their Supreme Author, the source of all perfection and only object of your adoration. “In him we live, move, and have our being.” He has surrounded us with blessings in the present life, and designed that when this scene shall close, we should enjoy superior happiness in the realms of immortality. To obtain this happiness, by improving the time and talents given for that end, is the sum of true wisdom. Be it your first care to secure this invaluable treasure:—it will render life pleasing, and smooth the evening of age:—it will ennoble your characters, and render you truly honourable

nourable in your stations. And what is still of infinitely greater importance, it will be the earnest of a glorious fruition beyond the grave.

Let not the sneer of libertines deter you from a steady perseverance in the paths of virtue. They will, they *must*, secretly revere you, when they see your firmness and stability: for there is something in genuine virtue so truly amiable, that its presence, like the touch of Ithuriel's spear, makes vice stand abashed and confounded.

I am,

With the best wishes for your lasting happiness,

Your Cordial Friend.

L A V I N I A T O M A R T I O .

THE ARGUMENT.

MARTIO, a young officer in the English army, had, just before the commencement of the late war, married LAVINIA, a young lady eminent for her beauty, virtue, and amiable qualities: with her he lived in the greatest amity for two years, and then received an order from the War-Office to repair to his regiment, which, some months before, had been ordered to Germany; where a general engagement with the French army was soon expected. On communicating this news to his lady, she (after having, to no purpose, persuaded him to resign his commission) insisted on accompanying him thither: but, at length, through the intercession of her husband and the rest of her relations, she was dissuaded from that rash attempt; and, after having attended him to Dover, they took a tender leave of each other. She then ascends the cliff, and follows the ship, with her eyes, till it eludes her sight. — On her return home, she writes the following Epistle to MARTIO, and sends it by a transport-vessel after him.

TO her lov'd lord, who on a hostile shore,
 Sees the war rage, and hears the cannons roar;—
 To her lov'd lord, on whom her life depends;—
 These tender lines distress'd LAVINIA sends.

I write,

I write, (sad task! that helps to wear away
The long, long, mournful, melancholy, day,
Write, what the fervours of my soul inspire,
And vainly fan love's slow-consuming fire.

With unavailing sorrow sunk, I grow
A silent, weeping, monument of woe!
Yet hope's kind rays sometimes afford relief,
And, for a moment, chase the clouds of grief;
Past scenes of bliss, in vision, I survey,
When pleasure led the smiling hours of day:
But soon, ah! soon, the fleeting phantoms fly,
And real woes their vacant place supply.
O mem'ry, source of happiness or woe,
As from thy stores past joys or sorrows flow,
How oft hast thou recall'd those happy hours,
Enjoy'd, by silver streams, in blooming bow'rs;
While ev'ry breeze that fann'd the conscious grove
Wafted around our vows of mutual love;
When I his suit with modest blush approv'd,
And sighs unconscious told how well I lov'd;
When he, enamour'd, snatch'd me to his arms,
And gaz'd, delighted, on my youthful charms!
To witness calling ev'ry pow'r above,
He vow'd a fix'd, inviolable, love;—
A love sublime and fervent as inspires
Celestial bosoms with ethereal fires!

Then I too fondly trusted female pow'r,
And, like the *present*, deem'd the *future*, hour:

I hop'd

270 LAVINIA TO MARTIO.

I hop'd that, bound by love's cementing tie,
From these fond arms my MARTIO ne'er would fly.
Alas, how vain! — The fields of combat claim
His only care, and *love* submits to *fame*.

Oh! how couldst thou thy dear LAVINIA leave,
To trust the dangers of the faithless wave!
Or how forsake thy peaceful native land,
To meet fierce conflicts on a foreign strand;
Where hell-born Discord holds her dreadful course;
Where rages war, with dire destructive force!
Where dying groans from wounded foldiers rise,
And nought but death and horror meet thine eyes!

When that sad hour arriv'd, which from my arms
Snatch'd thy dear form, and fill'd me with alarms,
Soon as thy bark, unmoor'd, with flying sails
Plough'd the green flood, and flew before the gales,
(While, loud resounding, roar'd the deeps below,)
Up the steep cliff, with lab'ring steps and slow,
My way I bent, and, with a tearful eye,
Trembling, beheld the less'ning vessel fly:
The lofty masts diminish'd in my view,
And crimson streamers wore a doubtful hue:
Swift fled the ship, beyond the reach of sight,
Lost in blue mists that usher'd in the night.
Then a cold shiv'ring seiz'd my languid frame:
I fell, — and soon insensible became.
Oh! had that moment giv'n me to the skies,
And kindly finish'd all my miseries;

Then

Then had my tears for ever ceas'd to run,
And these sad numbers ne'er had been begun!
But my attendants, with officious haste,
Recall'd my fleeting soul, again to taste
The cup of woe which MARTIO's absence brings,
And feel the force of sorrow's sharpest stings.

Then, frantic with despair, my hair I tore:
My loud lamentings echo'd round the shore.
Life I disdain'd; but 'twas my hapless fate
To wish in vain my death to antedate.
At length, a flood of tears, the friends of grief,
Incessant flow'd, and gave my soul relief:
With bended knee, I then to heav'n prefer'd
Pray'rs for the safety of my much-lov'd lord;
That, when the horrors of grim war arise,
And the fields echo with expiring cries,
Thou might'st in safety pass th' empurpl'd plain,
And, crown'd with conquest, bless these arms again.

Sometimes, when slumbers soft my eye-lids close,
And lull my senses in a short repose,
O'er thy uncertain fate my fancy rolls,
And *fear* alarming, ev'ry *hope* controuls.
Imagination, with her busy train,
Paints all the horrors of Germania's plain:
In visions dire the field of death appears,
And thou, encircled round with hostile spears.
Then, trembling, I behold the ruthless sword
Plung'd in the bosom of my dearest lord;

Or,

272 LAVINIA to MARTIO.

Or, sudden, hear the cannon's thund'ring sound,
And see thee pale and fainting on the ground!
Then, starting, wild with terror and affright,
I wake, and mourn away the tedious night.

When morn illumines the east, I, penfive, rise;
But, ah! no joy the fragrant morn supplies;
For fear, distracting fear, my breast invades,
Destroys my peace, and mournful makes the shades,
Where erst with thee I pass'd the happy hours,
When light-wing'd Love sat hov'ring o'er the bow'rs:
But, lost to joy, (my dearest MARTIO gone)
Penfive I sit, deserted, and alone:
Wasted with grief, LAVINIA now appears
A weeping ghost, like Niobe in tears:
No friend can cheer, or give my soul repose,
Or shed the balm of comfort o'er my woes;
For thou, perhaps, (distracting thought!) hast found
Some new LAVINIA, with perfection crown'd;
Some blooming fair, replete with matchless charms,
Whose beauty binds thee to her wanton arms:
Some blooming fair, of ev'ry grace possess'd,
Perhaps now reigns sole empress of thy breast

Ah, no! — for ever banish'd be these fears!
Thou wilt not, canst not, thus increase my tears!
Then let me not thy constancy accuse,
Or fear the treasure of thy heart to lose.
Thy spotless heart is pure as Alpine snows;
And truth dictated all thy tender vows.

No

No *thought* licentious did thy *actions* prove;
Chaste was thy passion; fervent was thy love.
Thy looks, persuasive, banish'd ev'ry fear;
Thy words, endearing, spoke thy soul sincere:
And when, dissolv'd in tender woe, I lay,
On the sad morning of the parting day;—
When pleading tears, the eloquence of pain,
Flow'd down my cheeks, but flow'd, alas! in vain;—
The soft distress disarm'd thy martial mind,
And shook the purpose which thy soul design'd:
Yet honour, stubborn honour, would not yield
To love, the triumphs of a conquer'd field;
But thee compell'd with sorrow in thine eye,
To quit these arms, and from this breast to fly.
Still, when the last, last parting moment came,
Through all the *hero* shone the *lover's* flame:
“Adieu, my fair,” with fault'ring voice he cried;
“Adieu, my fair,” the echoing rocks reply'd.

Come, then, my MARTIO; leave the hostile field,
Where fierce Bellona shakes her horrid shield:
With speed repass the intercepting main,
LAVINIA waits thee on thy native plain:
Fly to her bosom; she thy absence mourns:
Her love with undiminish'd fervor burns;
Her sighs, her pray'rs, her tears, unceasing flow,
And speak the language of perpetual woe.
If to her longing arms you quick return,
Life's quiv'ring lamp will then, rekindled, burn:

Her

Her languid looks new lustre will assume ;
Again the roses in her cheeks will bloom ;
Again young smiles will sparkle in her eye ;
And love and joy their mingled bliss supply.
But, in thy absence, fad, she pines away,
And soon to death, alas ! must fall a prey ;
Forlorn and wretched, on her natal shore,
She *now* but breathes, and *soon* will breathe no more.

LETTER

LETTER TO A FRIEND.

IN the year 1772, a very curious manuscript was lent to the author of this work, by an ingenious friend in London, who desired his opinion of it in writing. This manuscript contained most of the arguments advanced by infidel writers against the christian religion, and the immortality of the soul. It was, however, merely a compilation of sentences selected from the most eminent authors of the last age, and arranged together in such an artful manner as to form a curious, and, on a superficial view, a formidable chain of arguments in favour of both speculative and practical infidelity.

The compiler of the manuscript was a young man of uncommon parts and genius; but unhappily suffering his mind to wander in the mazes of scepticism, he became so unhappy, and so lost to the belief of a future state, as to end by suicide a life, which under the influence of virtuous principles, might have been rendered eminently serviceable to mankind.

On returning this manuscript, the Author of these Essays transmitted the following letter with it, to his friend.

HEREWITH, my friend Crito will receive the manuscript, together with the two very sensible letters that accompanied it, which I think ought always to be enclosed whenever it is trusted out of his hands, as a specific antidote to the poison it contains. Those letters contain such just and pertinent reflections, on the work, and its probable tendency and influence on weak minds, as seem to anticipate many of my own sentiments, and leave little for me to say on the subject. In compliance however with my friend's request, I shall subjoin a few brief remarks which occurred to me on reading this curious, and, with respect to its composition, *original* performance.—And first with regard to the execution of the work.

It is indeed surprizing, that the difficulty and laboriousness of the undertaking did not prevent the author from persisting to its accomplishment. His retentive powers must have been astonishingly strong; and he has proved himself a singular artist
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in selecting, squaring, and adjusting such a multitude of heterogeneous materials into so compact an edifice, as, to a cursory observer, will appear to have but little disproportion or irregularity.

Dangerous, however, as this work is, it might have been rendered still more so, by a more systematical and masterly arrangement and disposition of its parts; but it is rather with pleasure than regret that I reflect on this mark of inattention in the author.

His skill, however, as a workman (with all its defects) was very great, and far superior to his ingenuousness as a compiler. Many of the quotations he has introduced are manifestly wrested from their author's intention, and the sense they bear when connected with the context in their writings. By this artifice, Tillotson, Locke, Leland, Penn, and many other eminent writers, are made to speak a sense they never intended. This, had the work been published, would have been such an insult to the characters of those "illustrious dead" as the author could never have atoned for, and on the account of which he would have merited the severest censure:—a meanness justly censurable in all—but more especially in

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one whose superior talents ought to have instructed him better, and prevented him from doing such injustice to the characters of men who have been a blessing to mankind, and an honour to human nature.

Charity leads me to hope, that the author was (or at least thought himself) sincere in his concluding declaration of the motives which induced him to make this compilation: but if so, he appears to have been under a sad and fatal deception. I fear, were this work published, its only tendency, at least in common minds, would be to relax, irrecoverably relax, the sinews of virtue, lead men to throw off its sacred restrictions, and involve them in the dreary wilderness of universal scepticism. Many perhaps might, through its influence, be excited to make the same dreadful experiment, and close their unhappy days in like manner as did this author, and his favourite Blount.

In reading this work, I seemed to be traversing a dreary uncomfortable region, in which there was neither light to direct, nor warmth to animate, the traveller,—a region barren of present comforts, and where expectation and hope are cut off for ever.

If

If the christian religion in its genuine purity *be* a farce;—if in believing the precepts of its Great Founder, the best and wisest of men have been only following “cunningly devised fables,” the mere phantoms of a prolific fancy;—if the pleasures arising from obedience to its injunctions *be* all a dream:—In short, if present experience, and those hopes and fears which have the awful scenes of futurity for their object, *are* all a deception, and “baseless as the fabric of a vision,” where shall we look for real permanent substance, and essential good? To what can we have recourse for consolation in the hour of adversity? How limited will be our prospects, how gloomy the scene before us, when our race here is run, and we approach the “house appointed for all living!”

According to this author’s plan, we have nothing to fear after death. Grant him this for a moment: still life, however diversified, is sweet. It is pleasant to behold the sun, and the beauties of this lower creation; and even *without* the fear of future punishment, there is something in the idea of death, that shocks human nature. The dread of annihilation is so great, that it seems to be placed before the treasure of life, as a guard to preserve it. This is evident, not only in vulgar minds,

minds, but (a few instances excepted) even in those who affect to despise death, and disbelieve in an hereafter.

I have been informed on indisputable authority, that this writer's favourite author, Voltaire, was some years since suddenly seized with a disorder which threatened his life; and that, when in his own apprehension he was near death, he expressed much dread of it to one of his libertine friends who came to visit him. His friend endeavoured to ridicule him out of his fears, by adverting to his own principles. "For shame, sir, said he; "you who have so often professed to despise death, "and laughed at the idea of a future state, will "not, surely, turn fool in your last moments. "You have attained to a great age, and been "happy all your life, why then should you fear to "die; for, on your own scheme, you will suffer "nothing after death, because you will cease to "exist."

Voltaire replied, in much seeming agony of mind, "Alas! sir, you must not think to remove "my fears by these means. I assure you, existence is so sweet, that was I *absolutely certain* "there were no future state; and now stretched
"on

“ on the rack, with every joint dislocated, and
“ muscle extended to its utmost stretch, and were
“ the executioner to ask me, whether he should
“ end my torture, by giving me the coup-de-grace,
“ I would cry out *No, let me live, even in this mi-
“ sery, a little longer.*”

A remarkable instance this, to prove the innate love of existence, and the horrors that attend the prospect of annihilation. One more striking is not perhaps to be found in history: and I am inclined to think this would be the case with most men, who from the influence of infidelity, or from other causes, put an end to their lives, were they not at such times under a momentary delirium. Suicide is madness, and those writings that favour it are deadly poison.

I am therefore firmly of opinion, that the fewer hands this dangerous manuscript comes into, the better; for although there are some excellent things in it, yet many others which it contains would tend to hurt and corrupt the mind of the unwary reader. The propagation of such sentiments as it principally exhibits, has an evident tendency to unsettle men's minds, to disturb their peace, and to banish that serenity and lively hope

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which a modest, humble dependance on God, for help and preservation, produces in the soul.

Let us not therefore say (with the Soufys) that "Doubt is the key of knowledge." In many cases it is of great use in guarding us against the indulgence of that easy credulity which is the fruitful parent of absurdity and error. But, on the contrary, when extended to things on the belief of which much of our present comfort and happiness depend, or when it opposes rational, or strong presumptive evidence, arising either from the nature of things, or the credibility of divine or human testimony, it becomes the source of ignorance and disquietude.

Even the wise Pagans, on whom the light of the gospel had not dawned, believed in the reality of a future state of rewards and punishments. To impress this idea on vulgar minds, the fictitious scenery of their *Tartarus* and *Elysium* was displayed. And we find Socrates, in a conversation with his friends, on the morning of his execution, bearing testimony to this great truth, that "glorious was the prize reserved for victorious virtue, and firmly grounded her animating hopes of one day receiving it."

Those

Those who, like our author, range the barren wilderness of idle speculation and scepticism, without any polar star to direct and govern their course, are in a situation where little true happiness can be found. Their state seems to be beautifully and justly described by Milton, where he mentions some of the fallen angels in the following animated lines:—

- “ Others, apart, sat on a hill, retir’d
- “ In thought more elevate, and reason’d high
- “ Of Providence, fore-knowledge, will, and fate;
- “ Fix’d fate, free will, fore-knowledge absolute,
- “ And found no end; in wand’ring mazes lost.
- “ Of good and evil much they argued, then
- “ Of happiness, and final misery,
- “ Passion and apathy, glory, and shame,
- “ Vain wisdom all, and false philosophy.
- “ Yet with a pleasing sorcery could charm
- “ Pain for a while, and anguish, or excite
- “ Fallacious hope.”——

Such is the unhappy condition of the sceptic; and indeed it seems to be a mean attainment, after spending many years in the pursuit of knowledge, to arrive only at that spot where nothing can be known.

I cannot, however, avoid contemplating this author’s great abilities with a pensive regret,

without any emotion of displeasure; and when I behold so noble a monument of human genius, which appears "majestic though in ruin," I cannot help wishing, nay hoping, he may find that peace in futurity, which an improper use of his abilities, and a variety of cross occurrences, deprived him of on this side the grave.

To conclude:—Notwithstanding my apprehension that this work, if made public, would prove very prejudicial to mankind, it does not arise from any conviction that the author has overturned, or even shaken, any of the essential principles of the christian religion. That I believe to be founded on the sure basis of immutable truth. And I also am convinced, from some little experience, that in proportion as we believe in it, and fulfil the duties it enjoins, leaving all vain and fruitless enquiries about things too high for human investigation, will be our happiness in this life, and the more lively and substantial will be our hope of that superior felicity, which is the reward of virtue in the world and life that is to come.

I am, &c.

ON

ON THE FOLLY OF SEARCHING INTO
THINGS TOO HIGH FOR HUMAN
UNDERSTANDING.

" Secret things belong to God, but, things that are revealed,
to us and to our children."

WHOEVER seriously attends to the operations of his own mind, will receive frequent and humiliating proofs of the uncertainty in which he wanders after real knowledge. He will also see, that the most assiduous application to any single branch of science can extend that knowledge to very narrow limits. If we examine the frame of nature, or the manner in which those effects are produced, that are most familiar to us, we often find ourselves at a loss to discover their secret cause, or the precise mode by which that cause operates.

Our boasted knowledge is, in general, little more than mere conjecture. The most admired fabricks of human science are too often erected on
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the unsubstantial basis of theoretic wisdom. We attempt to account for many things in the natural world, on the slender evidence of a preconceived hypothesis; and hastily pronounce our system true before decisive experiment has ascertained its certainty. Men of the most penetrating genius and accurate enquiry have, to this day, been unable to account for various phenomena of nature which are continually the objects of their notice. The real causes of *vegetation*, the manner in which *sensation* is produced, the nature of the *electrical fluid*, the qualities of *light*, the *cohesion* of bodies, and their *gravitation* to one common centre, are of this number. Men of the greatest abilities have been long engaged in a laborious investigation of these subjects, but the contrariety that appears in their various explanations and opinions, evidently proves the enquiry to have been fruitless as to its real end, and that they have not yet been able to discover the true causes by which these phenomena are produced. They still remain inexplicable problems: they are, perhaps, beyond the reach of the human intellect, and may not be discovered while time remains.

But, notwithstanding every hour, and almost every object, present us with striking proofs of our
ignorance

ignorance as to the real nature and essence of things, that pride, which is so natural to the human mind, has excited some to investigate, and decisively to determine upon, things still more mysterious, and incomprehensible.

Some men have thus vainly attempted to explain the doctrine of the Trinity—the Hypostatical Union—and the manner and form in which the dead shall arise at the last day. These doctrines being founded on the sacred record of scripture, and delivered by immediate revelation, are more properly the objects of our faith or belief, than of enquiry and debate:—they are *secret things*, which “belong to God” alone.

Many, who, in ages past, assumed the appellation of Divines without being much acquainted with the nature of true divinity, have spread great contention through the Christian World by their vain disputes about things which they themselves could never comprehend; and perhaps there has not been a prospect more mortifying to the eye of human vanity, than that of the confusion which has ever attended such unprofitable enquiries.

Those

Those whose interest it has been to keep the people in ignorance, in order to secure their dependance on themselves, have shewn much more zeal in requiring men's assent to their explanations of these "secret things" than in enforcing the practice of those plain and obvious duties of life, on which the peace and order of both civil and religious society essentially depend. They have formed notions concerning these points, which, either the desire of appearing wiser than other men, the warmth of a deluded fancy, or a view to their own interest, induced them to propagate and maintain as the oracles of truth.

Had these men been content with merely holding as true their own explanation of things too high for them, the wiser part of the people might only have smiled at their folly and presumption. But when (as was the case while power remained in their hands) they proceeded to require an implicit assent thereto from others, on pain of the most severe penalties in this life, and an everlasting exclusion from the divine favour in that which is to come, it excites our just indignation and contempt.

Happily

Happily for the Christian World, this power has been long and generally checked. In proportion as learning and knowledge prevailed, men's eyes were opened; the bright beams of reason chased away the shades of bigotry and superstition, and the peace and happiness of society is now no longer under the dominion of ecclesiastical tyranny. The rod of sacerdotal power is not now permitted to enforce the belief of what men cannot comprehend, and which it is of no importance for them to know.

But the spirit of this disposition still remains in many minds, not only in the established Church, but also in most of the dissenting societies that compose the Christian world. They have made creeds and articles of faith a test of admission and of communion, which, containing a pretended explication of things in their own nature beyond human comprehension, can never be admissible to a rational mind.

But in this respect the conduct of the people called Quakers has been worthy the imitation of every other society. It is the most rational in itself, and attended with the happiest effects to mankind. If we examine their best writers, it

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will appear to every unprejudiced mind, that they fully believe in all the above-mentioned points as recorded in the scriptures, and regard them so far as they can in any wise promote purity of heart, and rectitude of conduct. Their general silence, in not attempting to explain them, has not proceeded from any deficiency in natural or acquired abilities; for there have been, and still are, many Quakers, whose learning and abilities would do honour to any religious community. But, considering these points to be “*secret things which belong to God*” only, they have modestly and wisely abstained from an unprofitable enquiry into their nature. They believe, according to the gospel record, that there are “*three who bear record in heaven,*” and these three are one.” But with respect to the mode of this union—whether they are *one undivided essence*; or whether the expression is to be understood *one* in their *operation* and *æconomy*, with regard to mankind, they have not presumed to determine.

In like manner have they treated the doctrine of the *Hypostatical Union*. They believe that the *divine* and *human* natures were *essentially united* in the external manifestation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in whom dwelt the fullness of the
 Godhead

Godhead bodily: and that although he was born of the seed of Abraham, he was at the same time the Lord from Heaven, the quickening Spirit, and Saviour of the World.

They likewise believe in the awful doctrines of a future judgment, and that *the dead shall arise at the last day*. But whether in the *same material bodies* in which they appeared among men, or in some vehicle more refined, and better adapted to the nature of spiritual beings, is a question which, for want of clear data to reason from, their prudence has prevented them from presuming to decide.

In these and some other subjects of the like abstruse nature, they have relied solely on the Divine Authority of the text, without indulging a vain curiosity to know more than the Holy Ghost has seen meet to discover concerning them; and rather employed their attention on things, which, being "revealed, belong to them and to their children."

It has pleased the Divine Author of our existence to discover himself to us, in a manner and degree sufficient to awaken in our minds the most awful reverence of and affection towards him. In "the things that are seen," the attentive humble mind

beholds him, who, in his own glorious essence, is invisible. Therein his wisdom, power, and goodness, and every other exalted attribute, are gloriously manifested. These attributes are *embodied* (if I may be allowed the term) in the distribution of God's general providence, and that divine œconomy which he has established in the universe. They shew us enough of Him, who is "glorious in holiness," and whose "delight is with the sons of men," to excite in our minds an ardent desire of seeking his protection and favour here, and of being ultimately united to him for ever.

He has also given us a more particular display of himself and of our duty to him, in his *revealed will*. The Holy Scriptures are an inestimable treasury of truths to us the most interesting. They are replete with the most perfect maxims of sound morality, and point out our religious duties with clearness and precision. But lest all this should be neglected, or through inattention we should mistake our duty, God has condescended to place a measure of his spirit or grace in the hearts of all men, to profit withal; to be a swift witness against all evil, and an infallible director in the way of righteousness.

To regard these manifestations of the Divine Will concerning us, and steadily to practise those rules of conduct which are enjoined thereby, is of the utmost consequence to us; and early to impress them on the minds of our children is our indispensable duty. A uniform practice of this kind will employ those hours, which can be spared from secular concerns, to far greater advantage than can possibly arise from vainly attempting to explain those "secret things," which are beyond our reach, and "belong to God" only.

"He hath shewn thee, O man, what is good, and "what doth the Lord thy God require of thee;" that thou shouldst "do justly, love mercy, and walk "humbly before him." This compendium of a Christian's duty contains the sum and substance of true religion. And when these things are reduced to practice, under the influence of that love or charity which is the perfection of the law, they will intitle the observer to the dignified character of a real Christian.

We shall therefore discover the greatest wisdom, by confining our researches in matters of a religious nature within the limits of *things which are revealed*; to subjects proportioned to
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the narrow extent of the human understanding, and which are of the greatest importance to, and obligatory on, "us and our children."

"Aspiring to be Gods, if Angels fell,

"Aspiring to be Angels, Men rebel."

Let us therefore repress that idle curiosity which attempts to draw back the separating veil, and pry into those mysteries which perhaps no created intelligence can fully comprehend.

To know God as He is, to comprehend his essence, and to trace out the secret causes of that divine œconomy manifest in all his works, require the faculties of an infinite mind.

The glorious perfections of uncreated excellence—those incommunicable attributes which constitute Him Sovereign Lord of the Universe, are perhaps too exalted a subject for the highest orders of celestial beings to explore. Let us, then, who, in the sight of that infinite Eye which pervades immensity, are "less than nothing and "vanity," consider them as the subject of silent solemn adoration: He is in Heaven, and we are on Earth! Let us make use of the means he has appointed for our attaining such knowledge as is
adapted

adapted to our present state, and will best promote in us those good affections, and that rectitude of action, which are necessary for our future well-being. It is our proper business while here to attend diligently to those "things that are revealed;" and to leave those secret things" which God has been pleased to hide from us, till we arrive at that state where present doubts may be solved, where faith will end in certainty, and hope in the enjoyment of all its objects.—Then, perhaps, it may be a part of the employment of happy spirits to explore with delight the mysteries of that kingdom which we now behold but "darkly, and as through "a glass;"—to comprehend the *now* impenetrable secrets of nature and providence; and to approach in the scale of perfection still nearer and nearer to that divine original in whose image we were formed.

O N H A P P I N E S S.

“ Oh Happiness, thy blest retreat disclose;”

“ There let me dwell.”——

ANON.

IF we examine into the real cause of that restlessness and anxiety with which mankind shift from one scene to another, and engage in such a variety of pursuits, it will appear to be a desire of getting free from some real or imaginary inconveniences, and of obtaining some absent good. It is a common and very prevalent error, among all ranks of men, to suppose that happiness is placed *without* them. In consequence hereof the above-mentioned desire is extended to innumerable objects. Of these, some are not attainable; and the possession of others has proved them insufficient to give what is vainly expected from them. Hence, it is no marvel, that pursuits and expectations, formed on so false a principle, should generally terminate in disappointment.

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But although thousands, in past ages, have from sad experience proved and declared the fallacy of this position, and the vanity of such pursuits, yet their successors, impelled by desires, and prompted by hopes equally fallacious, continue to run the same giddy round of folly, and are equally disappointed.

It indeed appears strange, to a philosophic mind, that men who are free from any affliction of body, and from the persecutions of adverse fortune;—men who possess faculties capable of opening a thousand sources of pleasure, in the disquisition of Nature's works, and contemplation of the moral and intellectual worlds, should ever be remarkably unhappy. It might reasonably be expected, that the sweets of friendship, the fields of science, and the endearments of social domestic life, would at all times afford that happiness which many seek for in vain. Yet we see numbers thus stationed, and thus endowed, as discontented with their lot, and as restless after "something unpossessed," as those of any other rank in life. They are constantly murmuring at their respective situations in the great scale of existence, and ridiculously imagining that none are so disagreeably stationed as themselves.

The man of leisure is at a loss for employment, and sighs for the hurry of commercial life. The man of business sinks under its weight, and feels a weariness which renders it irksome. He continually laments the fatigue he undergoes, and envies the owner of each little hut he sees. On the other hand, the objects of his envy survey the inferiority of their circumstances with a sigh, and wish that Providence had placed them in a station where the exertion of moderate abilities might have acquired an easy fortune. The ecclesiastic, struck with the splendor of military pomp, would willingly exchange his sable vestments for the glittering ornaments of the soldier, and lay aside the study of classical lore, for that of attacks, sieges, and martial evolutions: while the soldier, torn from his native land to scenes of desolation, horror, and death, would gladly resign his hopes of attaining the honours of the field, for a *snug cure*, where with his wife and children he might play at cards, and rest in ease and security.

If we rise still higher in the scale of life, the case is the same. Even in those elevated stations where almost every wish finds immediate gratification, happiness is seldom to be found. In perpetual agitation, like the waves of a troubled sea,

sea, the great and opulent are perpetually shifting the scene, flying from place to place, and daily torturing their imaginations to find out new amusements. In the midst of all his pomp and splendor, the nobleman is frequently the slave of ambition and the victim of regret. In vain does a second Eden, with all its sweets and beauties, bloom around him in summer; in vain does a palace, in winter, screen him from the storm, and invite him to repose;—with a pallid indifference, he surveys the bright circle of domestic and social joys; in vain a rising progeny surround his knees, and address him with the tender appellation of father; and in vain does the melting voice of beauty salute his ear with the language of connubial affection.

Lost to these enjoyments, he pants at the shrine of power, longs to guide the helm, and become the *Palinurus* of the state. Behold, his wishes are at length gratified. He receives the ensigns of office; numerous dependants bow at his levee for the honour of a word, a smile, or a nod; but all this affords him not the happiness he fondly expected: on the contrary, he is more wretched than before. Traduced, misrepresented, and vilified by party, insolence, and envy, his best

actions are ascribed to the worst motives, and his weakness or mistakes exposed with the most cruel aggravations. Unable to gratify all the demands of his friends, or to bear the undeserved malevolence of his adversaries, he sickens for retirement, yet dreads to retire.

The misery of his situation is hourly augmented; and his pre-eminence in station is purchased at the expence of pre-eminence in distress. Thus circumstanced, what must he do? To resign is to give his enemies a compleat triumph; and to continue in office is to suffer the greatest mortification. In this dilemma, he is tossed by a conflict of passions; his tranquility is sacrificed to pride, and the lust of power: he determines to resist every storm of faction, and, by a persevering magnanimity, to repel the attacks, and defeat the designs of his enemies. He endeavours by every means to strengthen and establish his authority; till, having conquered his shame, in courting some, and extinguished his humanity, in punishing others, he becomes divested of principle, and regardless of reputation. At length, by the united influence of good and bad men, he is chased from the presence of his Sovereign; the clamour becomes universal; he sinks under it, and
buries

buries himself in solitude, detesting others, and detested by society.

I grant there is nothing new in the portraits here drawn of the unhappy. Moralists have frequently remarked them, and observation daily points out the originals: but still, in the foregoing hints, there is something which may tend to elucidate the remaining part of this essay.

It is generally supposed, that a man must be happy, when, by his situation in life, and easiness of circumstances, he is on the one hand exempted from the fatigues of business, and on the other, defended by the humility of his wishes from the dangers of ambition. But, enviable as this situation may appear, we see, in numerous instances, that neither a comfortable competency, nor a limited expectation, are able to secure real and lasting felicity. As a proof of this, I will adduce an example:—

PHYLENOR, by the death of a relation, became, at an early age, the owner of a good estate. From a natural love of prudence and frugality, his income considerably exceeded his expences. He is nevertheless one of the most discontented mortals breathing.

breathing. Constantly lamenting that he has nothing to do, Phylenor is ever miserable, because he has no one vigorous spring of action. He gets up merely to lie down; he rides out only to ride home again; he sees to-day what he saw yesterday; he tries a thousand ways to hasten the lingering progress of time, unanimated by motive, and uninformed by novelty. His wife is prudent, discreet, good-tempered, beautiful, and chaste, but—she has been his wife these ten years. They have long since discussed every subject that could to them furnish matter for conversation; and as to her personal charms, they have been too long familiar to be now perceptible. When without doors, their discourse turns chiefly on the weather; when within, the grand article of dinner principally employs their intellectual faculties. When the sun shines very hot, they discover that the weather is sultry; if it be very rainy, they conclude that the day is disagreeable. Books afford them little entertainment, because they have been repeatedly read; and company is irksome, because their guests generally appear to be happier than themselves. In the country, they frequently travel miles together without breaking silence, unless to tell each other that the fields are green, or the roads dusty: In town they entertain

tain each other with a snore or a yawn from opposite sides of the fire-place, when the servant has removed the table-cloth. This life of inactivity is an insupportable burthen; they languish

“ On the rack of a too easy chair,”

and envy the meanest artisan who sings at his labour, and performs it with alacrity. Their time is not *enjoyed* but *endured*: they rather exist than live. They see whole days before them which they know not how to fill up; and the prospect becomes still more distressing when they look forward to long weeks and months, which they are utterly at a loss to render supportable.

In the general community of mankind there are many thus circumstanced; who, either by neglecting the proper means to acquire happiness, or seeking it where it is not to be found, doze away their days in a stoical apathy, or pine under the anguish of reiterated disappointment. They consider not that *true happiness is only to be found in the mind*; and that it depends more on a disposition contented with its station, and thankful to the Author of all Good for the blessings it enjoys, than on an increase of wealth, honours, and terrestrial grandeur. Those who neglect to cultivate
this

this disposition, and seek for happiness in objects *without them*, will ever seek it in vain. Riches, titles, and worldly honours, cannot yield it. They have been "weighed in the balance," and by frequent experience found "lighter than vanity."

When amusements become our constant business, they are attended with the painfulness without the advantage of labour. Those enjoyments which are constantly in our possession, cease to give us delight, when our views extend not to objects of a more sublime and durable nature.

But of this general dissatisfaction, and thirst after happiness, an excellent moral use may be made by a philosophic mind. It shews to a demonstration, that something superior to all transitory things is requisite to satisfy the cravings of an immortal spirit, and fill up its vast capacities of enjoyment. A wise man's hopes and desires extend beyond the limits of this world. He looks forward to a scene infinitely more glorious. He knows that true happiness resides only in the mind: when that is brought into a state of content, and centered on its proper object, the present scene of things wears a smile, and happiness enlivens our dwellings. But when men place their
felicity

felicity on things which are in their nature subject to mutation and decay; when they indulge a discontented disposition on every occurrence that frustrates their expectations; when they are hunting from object to object, for that which is only to be found in their own minds, it is a proof that the soul has wandered from its proper center, and, like the needle, which by some extraneous force is diverted from its pole, is in perpetual agitation, and cannot rest until it finds it.

CHARITY RECOMMENDED.

“ If thou haft abundance, give alms accordingly; if thou haft
 “ but a little, be not afraid to give according to that little;
 “ for thou layeft up a good treasure for thyfelf againft the
 “ day of neceffity.”

TOBIT, Chap. iv. ver. 8, 9.

MANY excellent difcourfes from the pulpit, and effays from the clofet, have been communicated to the world, on the fubject of Charity. It has been recommended with fuch energy, and its effects fo amply delineated, by the moft mafterly pens, that it is fcarcely poffible to fay any thing new upon it.

But on a fubject of fuch great importance, I hope it will not be deemed impertinent in me to throw before my readers a few reflections which may poffibly have fome fmall tendency to promote it. While fo many objects of want and mifery remain, it cannot be improper to enforce the duty. To feel for, and compassionate, the fufferings of our fellow-

fellow-creatures, becomes human beings; and to alleviate them in proportion to our abilities, is the noblest use to which our wealth can be appropriated.

Of all the virtues, Charity is the most godlike. Gratitude supposes a prior obligation. Love has something self-interesting for its object. Rectitude of conduct may take place from the desire of avoiding disagreeable consequences, and of obtaining worldly reputation; but Charity is more excellent and disinterested in its nature.

This is a virtue which I sincerely wish to promote in the minds of my readers. I would, if possible, awaken it where it is not apparent, and fan the celestial flame in those breasts where it burns but dimly. If I am importunate, it is for the sake of those whose misery pleads with moving importunity.

I am very far from thinking that avarice is the prevailing vice of the present age. In proportion as liberality of sentiment gains ground in a nation, generosity of action will ever be its attendant virtue. The one seems naturally to flow from the other.

The many public charities that have been founded within the present century, are an honour to this age and nation. And the readiness shewn in contributing to the relief of those who have met with particular losses, or are obviously in great distress from causes which it was not in their power to counteract, are noble proofs of that benevolence of soul, which not only pities, but endeavours to alleviate the pangs of human woe.

But it is in country villages, remote from the observation of the rich and charitable, that the most affecting scenes of poverty are to be found. Here the poor languish in secret sorrow, unnoticed by those who have a power and disposition to help them.

The almost general desertion of country villages by our gentry, is one cause of the poor being in greater distress there than in other places.

To those who are blessed with minds susceptible of tender impressions, it is melancholy to reflect, that while our gracious Creator has made ample provision for the real wants of all his creatures, any should feel the want of them. Yet many
such

such there are, especially in places where the care of supporting the poor is left to men of low and grovelling ideas, whose views are bounded by self-interest, and who have very little feeling for the distresses of the helpless, the infirm, and the aged. Devoid of every sentiment that gives dignity to man, their hearts are steeled against the complaints of human woe. Many of these men, while they roll in wealth, "grind the face of the poor," by beating them down in their wages; and seem to exult in their own skill and low cunning, when they have thus wrested away a part of the price justly due to their dependant's hard labour.

Many of these men, who perhaps never gave "misery a six-pence," except when obliged to it by the parochial laws, or with a view to *save a shilling* by their bounty, will not hesitate to spend six or seven shillings at a market, and return home at midnight, or next morning, somewhat *less rational* than the beasts that carried them.

Of such shadows of humanity there is but little hope. Being incapable of relishing any pleasure but that of indulging their appetites, or heaping up money, and insensible to shame, there seems
nothing

nothing in them for argument or persuasion to work upon. But there are other classes of men on whom these reflections may not be wholly lost. To these I beg leave to address myself. However feeble my endeavours, or unequal to do justice to the subject, I feel the force of the duty I am recommending, and wish to awaken their minds to a just sense of its importance.

Almost every parish affords such scenes of complicated distress, as nothing but their frequency could prevent from exciting peculiar emotions of compassion in all minds endued with the common feelings of humanity: yet we find numbers are suffered to languish in abject penury, without sufficient food, fire, or cloathing.

Many excuses have been urged, by those who want true motives to be charitable, for withholding that assistance which poverty justly claims from affluence. Some of them may appear reasonable to the avaricious; but when impartially examined, they will have little weight with generous minds.

The strongest objections that have been, or can be made to the general exercise of charity, are,
“that many of the poor are the authors of their
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“ own misery;—that by their imprudence and
“ want of œconomy they have reduced themselves
“ to their present deplorable condition;—and that
“ had they money given them they would spend
“ it in liquor, and remain idle while it lasted,
“ instead of purchasing necessaries for their families.” These charges are doubtless in too many instances just; and will remain so while human nature continues as it is. Hence the covetous man endeavours to persuade himself, and others, that extending relief to the poor is no real charity. But such ought to consider, that the misconduct and bad œconomy of a few ought not to shut up the hearts and confine the hands of the rich from dealing forth their bounty to the deserving poor, many of whom would apply it in the best manner they are able.

There are, however, methods by which the poor might be relieved, which are not liable to the above-mentioned abuses.

Instead of giving the poor money, the principal inhabitants of each parish might make general subscriptions, and therewith purchase corn, coals, or wood, and cheap warm cloathing, to be sold out to them at half price. By this means they
would

would be obliged to work, and at the same time might with their wages procure the necessaries of life at an easy rate. This would render them much more comfortable than they are at present, and be far better than relieving them in money, which too many, not having sufficient conduct to apply properly, would spend in drink and idleness while it lasted.

It has long been a complaint in most parishes, that the poor-rates are much increased within the last thirty years, and that the weight of them is already too heavy on the occupiers of land, who bear the principal part of the burthen. There is doubtless much truth in the remark. It is not my present business to enquire into the cause, but rather to point out a remedy which shall not injure the poor.

Therefore, in order that parish rates may not be increased by an extra provision for paupers, let such subscriptions as I have mentioned be made (as in all large towns especially, they may) by persons of independent fortunes, and tradesmen. They are indeed exempted from much share in the burthen by the parochial laws of our country; but the superior obligations of justice, reason, and
humanity,

humanity, call on every man to give in proportion to his ability. These might raise a comfortable supply for the poor, without injuring their own fortunes. It would add lustre to their characters thus to extend their benevolence, and contribute their endeavours to lessen human misery.

Happy would it be for mankind, if every scene of sorrow could be removed; every case of oppression redressed: but this is not to be expected. Therefore the first exercise of our charity should extend to objects most worthy, and most eminently distressed.

This is a conduct so consistent with the express command and example of Him "who went about "doing good," and with the genuine feelings of an uncorrupted heart, that every man must secretly approve, however deficient he may be in practising it. None can be so insensible of the obligations to charity, as to think themselves excusable in not lending their assistance to lighten that load of affliction which lies so heavy on thousands of their fellow-creatures.

Did those whom Heaven has blessed with affluence, but visit the secret recesses of poverty those

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dreary abodes of sorrow, where infantile weakness and the decrepitude of age languish under the pressure of affliction, without a friend to help, or an eye to pity, how painful would be their feelings till they had rendered them joyful by diffusing comfort to the wretched. Did they but behold, as I have done, a numerous family of little innocents surrounding the knees of an afflicted mother, and crying for bread, how strong would be their sympathy! Did they but behold the mother pale and emaciated with want—expressive anguish painted on her countenance, while endeavouring to silence her children's clamours with the bare sustenance of words, what tender emotions it would raise in their breasts!

Among other cases not less affecting, the following fell under my notice. A poor man, whom I shall call Clodio, had a sickly wife and seven small children to support by his own labour. Six shillings a week was the utmost he could earn. With this pittance only, how could he supply their numerous and pressing wants? Rather than submit to the brow-beating and hard language of unfeeling parish-officers, he was willing to suffer in silence. When he enters his cot at night, weary with toil, his almost naked babes cry for bread.

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The mother's looks are expressive of her own wants. Clodio has all the tender feelings of a husband and a father. The tear of distress fills his eye. He is too sensible of parental affection to let his helpless babes ask in vain, while any thing remains to feed them. He divides the small brown loaf among his family with nice precision, and has himself the least share in the sparing repast. When at work, he has often been seen to cut himself a small piece of bread for a meal, scarce half enough to satisfy his hunger, that he might carry home the more to his family, and has been content if his children were supplied. He does his utmost for their support, and is himself the greatest sufferer in a suffering family. Such a case as this must affect every humane mind with compassion and with pain. In private country villages, there are many Clodio's. Far from the observation of the great, they pine in solitude, without a friend to help them.

But a great part of the miseries arising from poverty might be removed, if men of ability would seek out, and extend their charity to the unhappy objects around them. What a luxury of delight would an employment of this nature furnish to a generous mind! It can never be the design of the

Great Author of all we enjoy, that any of his creatures should want the necessaries of life, while their neighbours are rioting in luxury and profusion. Clemency and compassion speak the true dignity of man; and the want of them is a dishonour to the christian name. To extend comfort to helpless distress, is exercising one of the noblest virtues that can enrich the human breast. Nothing is more amiable in itself; nothing adds more true lustre to the characters of the great. Let them go to the house of mourning, and visit the chambers of the dying poor—dying perhaps for want of that assistance which they can so easily bestow. Let them behold their fellow-beings, emaciated with disease—eagerly praying for human relief but finding none; struggling in the agonies of expiration, and breathing the last gasp of a miserable life, for want of timely help and comfort.

In scenes like these, who is there that bears the name of man, but would afford such deplorable objects that kind assistance which is due to every member of the family of our common “father who is in heaven?”

Fictitious sorrow has its force, and can find its way to the heart. The passion of sympathy may
be

be awakened by the powers of eloquence; but here is no need of employing such expedients. The present picture is drawn from real life. I will add another for general imitation.

BENEVOLUS is a Gentleman of moderate but easy fortune; a stranger to avarice, but prudent in the distribution of his income. Possessing a liberal mind, he gives freely; but knows to whom he gives, and the uses to which his bounty is applied.

He goes once a week round his parish, and visits, at times when he is least expected, the habitations of the poor. He observes their œconomy, enquires into their wants, and at the same time that he endeavours to improve the one, relieves the other. To this noble purpose he constantly applies a twelfth part of his nett income. If, from any extraordinary demand on his feelings, that sum falls short, he retrenches some expences which are not strictly necessary, rather than suffer his *pensioners* to want that assistance which Providence has empowered him to give. He makes it a point to encourage industry even in the exercise of his charity. He buys materials for cloathing the poor, of little tradesmen in his neighbourhood,

neighbourhood, who find it difficult to maintain their families reputably, or who have been, through unavoidable losses, unfortunate. These he employs the poor to make up, and sells them at half price. In a severe season, he retrenches his *bottle* to a *pint* of wine in a day, and, with the money thus saved, purchases coals, which he sells out at the same reduced price. Thus he confines his own expences within the limits of frugality, rather than break in upon that part of his wealth of which he considers himself only as a steward for the wretched. The pleasure he receives from thus becoming a husband to the widow, and a father to the orphan, is superior to that which the accumulation of useless thousands can afford. When he approaches the cottages of poverty, the eyes that were accustomed to weep, are brightened with a smile; and joy overspreads those faces which want had covered with paleness. A glow of paternal tenderness and delight is visible in his countenance, when he hears the blessings of the poor, and sees the children stretching out their little hands to receive his bounty. He returns home with that serene joy and complacency of mind, which is the earnest of a future blessed reward.

Let

Let the amiable example of Benevolus excite all, in proportion to their ability, to "go and do so likewise." The greatest advantage which the wealthy have over others, is their power to do good. If such would consider, that the poor are *their brethren*, formed for the same noble purposes, and equally dear to the Universal Parent, as themselves, they will want little excitement to a generous conduct. For although it has pleased the Supreme Being to permit a diversity in the circumstances of men, it can never be pleasing in his sight, that any part of his creation should be suffered to languish in want and misery.

What pleasure is there so exalted and refined, even in this life, as that arising from the communication of happiness? What character so contemptible as a hard-hearted, penurious, rich man?

If pity and compassion are strangers to our breasts,—if self-love and avarice steel our hearts against the tender emotions of humanity, and the known commands of God,—where will be our refuge in the awful day of retribution? The subtrefuges, the poor superficial excuses, which now give quiet to contracted and sordid minds, will not avail them in that discriminating hour when
enquiry

enquiry will be made, "whom have ye fed, "whom have ye cloathed, or whom have ye "visited when sick, or in prison?"

To conclude:—If we regard our characters as christians; if we are desirous of "laying up a "good treasure against the day of necessity;" if we seek to stand approved in the sight of God, of Angels, and of men; if there is any thing desirable in time—any thing to be wished or feared in the scenes of eternity; let this awful consideration excite us to diligence, that it is "the merciful "only who shall obtain mercy," and be inheritors of that "crown of glory which fadeth not away." The happy consciousness of having discharged the great duty of benevolence will yield unspeakable satisfaction in that great day of discovery and decision, when the latent purpose of every heart will be explored—every action will be stripped of its mask, and, for all the deeds of mortality, we shall receive an equitable reward.

ON THE INEQUALITY OF OUR PENAL LAWS.

“ ————When man’s life is in debate,
“ The Judge can ne’er too long deliberate.”

I HAVE often employed a leisure hour in considering the penal laws of this country; and, by comparing them with those of Judaism and Christianity, examined their justice and propriety. The result has been, a conviction, that in divers instances they are not agreeable to either.

The Mosaic code of laws appears to have had regard to *Strict Justice*, and to admit but little exertion of those milder attributes, *Mercy* and *Forgiveness*.

The Christian dispensation has been justly defined *a dispensation wherein the severity of strict Justice should be tempered with Grace and Mercy*. Christianity was intended by its Divine Founder, to relax the severity of Judaism; therefore, its

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laws

laws are, in their own nature, more consistent with mercy than were those of the Jews. By the latter, theft, or the injury of property, were never considered as crimes for which the offenders deserved death. For acts of injustice, with respect to property, lesser punishments were appointed; and wisely proportioned to the nature and malignity of the offence.

But by our penal laws, many crimes, very different in their degrees of guilt, are comprehended in the term *Felony*, for every species of which the offender is by those laws punishable with death. Hence, multitudes have been consigned to the *fatal tree*, who by a less severe punishment might have atoned for their guilt, and been reclaimed to virtue. Thus the community have unnecessarily suffered loss; and merciful men have been long pained to see the havock made among their fellow-creatures.

As the taking away life is the utmost length human justice can go, the dictates of reason and humanity forbid that it should ever take place for a less crime than that of *Murder*. Thieves and other offenders certainly deserve punishment; but still they have not forfeited the privilege

vilege of existence. The injury that individuals or society have sustained by their crimes, is not great enough to demand so dreadful a sacrifice. The offences, although of a deep dye, have not been *written in blood*, and therefore might be cancelled by a less severe expiation.

To exceed the proper proportion of punishments to offences, is not *Justice* but *Severity*. To remit a part of the punishment which strict justice requires, is sometimes a necessary extension of that mercy, which is the darling attribute of the Judge of the whole earth, and the brightest jewel in a Monarch's crown. But to punish a *Thief* equally with a *blood-thirsty Murderer*, appears to be as inconsistent with reason and justice, as with the divine precepts of the gospel.

It will perhaps be alledged, that although our laws condemn the man who steals a horse, or a sheep, or is guilty of house-breaking, and the like, to die for his crime, yet, where any favourable circumstances appear, the severity of the punishment is mitigated, and the delinquents are not deprived of life. That this is sometimes the case I readily allow, and think it is much to the honour of our Judges that they are thus tender

324 *Inequality of the Penal Laws.*

and compassionate. But even the vesting them with this discretionary power of reprieving criminals after condemnation, is a tacit confession that the *law itself*, by which sentence was passed, is *unjust*. And although the punishment of death, for the above-mentioned crimes, is often remitted, yet numerous instances have occurred of poor wretches losing their lives for only the invasion of property.

I am as desirous as any man can be, that our property should be strictly guarded, and wish not to have the least invasion of it escape due correction. What I plead for is, that in all cases, the punishment inflicted may be proportioned to the nature and turpitude of the offence.

It is a consideration worthy of note, that most robbers are persons of dissolute lives, and lazy dispositions. To such, confinement and hard labour would be punishments much more terrible, both in idea and experience, than death itself. They consider death as soon over, and, in general, have no just ideas of the dreadful scene that succeeds it.

This indeed has been alledged by some short-sighted reasoners, as a strong argument against the probability

probability of their reformation. It has been urged, that wretches, in whom the prospect of death excites no terror, would not be affected or reclaimed by any inferior punishment. I freely own myself to be of a different opinion. When separated from their wicked associates, and confined to hard labour, time and suffering might often bring them to repentance. While there is the least probability of this, such insensibility furnishes a far stronger reason against sending them into eternity in a state so obdurate.

There is something so shocking to humanity in the reflection that numbers of our species are thus annually bereft of life—

“ Cut off, e’en in the blossom of their sins,
“ No reck’ning made, but sent to their account
“ With all their imperfections on their heads,”

that a relaxation of our laws in this respect is an event, which I think every merciful and good man would rejoice to see take place in these kingdoms.

The present mode of cutting off so many offenders at stated periods, has by long and sad experience been found ineffectual to deter fresh adventurers from succeeding them in their crimes.

Old

Old offenders are, indeed, swept from the stage of life, but their places are quickly filled up by others, who soon arrive at the same exit; and thus multitudes have been precipitated to eternity, while little if any reformation has been produced thereby. The frequent dreadful processions from the prison to places of execution, the last expiring scenes of the deep tragedy, have lost the power to terrify, and are become so familiar, that they appear not to affect common spectators with any lasting impressions.

But perhaps other punishments might be inflicted, that would be likely to produce reformation in the offenders, and become more powerful warnings to others. Our iron and glass works, lead and tin mines, inland navigations, and turnpike roads, would furnish employment for far more than are annually convicted. Some of these are prejudicial to health, and herein the greatest offenders (except murderers) might be employed. Here they might (if necessary) be chained together, with some visible mark of infamy upon them, and kept to hard labour until they had given some proof of repentance and reformation. From their being thus employed, much benefit would arise to the public; and compassionate minds would be
greatly

greatly relieved from the anxiety they feel on account of the frequency of our public executions. The advantages thence arising would be many and various. A part of the profits of their labour would easily supply proper guards and overseers; and the remainder might be converted into a fund for defraying the expence of prosecutions, and appropriated to the service of Government.

The true ends of punishment are, first, to reform the offender; secondly, to deter others from following his example. Punishment is a medicine intended to cure the disease; but where, like a noxious potion, it terminates the existence of the patient, that end cannot be answered. Hence, when a criminal is executed, no reformation of conduct can, in him, take place,—all opportunity of making reparation to those he had injured is cut off for ever. The only advantages arising from his death are, that it is no longer in *his* power to violate the Laws of Justice and Humanity; and that his punishment, while it lessens the number of villains, may possibly have some effect in deterring others from the commission of similar crimes.

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The first of these advantages would be equally gained by his confinement as by his death; and, as I have before observed, public executions have by their frequency lost the power to terrify. Hence it appears high time to put an end to those periodical exhibitions of human vengeance, which long experience has proved ineffectual with respect to the only valuable purposes of punishment.

Confinement, labour, and the want of opportunity to repeat their vicious practices, might in time bring many criminals to repentance. Under such treatment, they might make some atonement for their crimes both to God and man, and would be continual warnings to others. The impressions made by public executions, on minds highly depraved, are soon effaced. In some instances they only tend to harden others in their guilt.

Men of humane dispositions and christian principles, under all denominations, will ever consider the life of an offender to be of infinitely greater consequence than the loss of a horse, a sheep, or a purse of money. And, by this very consideration, many are hindered from bringing
thieves

thieves to the bar, left a too severe sentence should consign them to unmerited punishment.

Thus, from the inequality of our penal laws, many offenders are, from motives of benevolence, suffered to go on from crime to crime, till they *merit* death, because, had they been earlier convicted, they would probably have suffered death before they had in strict justice deserved it.

It were greatly to be wished, that the ancient laws of commutative justice were more attended to, and applied. In many instances, they would be far more rational, and productive of better effects, than that heterogeneous mixture of mistaken lenity and unjust severity, which so generally takes place among us. And I sincerely wish that these few desultory hints, on a subject which is confessedly of the greatest importance, may excite some abler pen to elucidate it in a manner that may tend to promote the good of community, and save the lives of those who from the violation of property are in danger of death and perdition.

THE CASTLE OF TINTADGEL,
OR THE
CAPTIVE PRINCESS OF DENMARK.

[Written by a young Gentleman at Oxford, and inserted at *his* particular request.]

ARGUMENT.

In a battle between the Saxons and Danes, ARVINA, the beautiful daughter of SWENO King of Denmark, having been taken prisoner by ODRED, Chief of the Saxons, is confined in the Castle of TINTADGEL. There the lovely Mourner is represented as surrounded with every circumstance of horror. At length, in fancy, she sees the ghost of her father, and swoons away and dies.

I.

HIGH o'er TINTADGEL's* ecchoing tow'rs
Flew the dark Genius of the blast:
Around the scene the tempest lours,
And roars along the spectred waste:
Whilst the blue meteor stream'd with transient light,
The rolling thunder shook the shades of night.

* An ancient ruinous castle on the north coast of Cornwall. See Borlase's Antiquities.

II. Immur'd

II.

Immur'd amidst these dreary walls,
A solitary Mourner sat,
And, as the shade of sorrow falls
Dark from the hov'ring cloud of fate,
Oft from her eye the silent waters start,
Pale her wan cheek, and cold her flutt'ring heart.

III.

Where erst the wanton zephyr stray'd,
Enamour'd of her heaving breast,
Where auburn locks of beauty play'd,
The ruder gales in fury prest:
Yet softly languish'd each disorder'd grace,
Yet smil'd the dying sweetness of her face.

IV.

To soothe her woe, no ev'ning star
Diffus'd its lustre o'er the sky;
No gentle spirit caught the tear
That dropp'd from Pity's melting eye.
While trembling on her white arm lean'd her head,
In many a broken sound she mourn'd the dead.

V.

Oft starting wildly from her seat,
What conflicts shook her shiv'ring frame!
Alarm'd she hears the dread waves beat,
Alarm'd she views the wrathful flame,

That; flashing thro' the blackness of the storm,
Threats with the blast of death her virgin form.

VI.

Yet troubled Fancy to her eye,
In lively portraiture displays,
Amid her woes of deeper dye,
The vision of her happier days:
And, as her sighs pervade the unfeeling air,
Thus solitary mourns the poor distracted fair:—

VII.

“ To wish for life, alas, how vain!
“ ARVINA woos the dreary tomb:
“ But oh, in stillness to complain,
“ Relieves the pensive mourner's doom!
“ How fruitless for a gleam of hope the prayer!
“ ARVINA falls a victim to despair.

VIII.

“ Soon may the pangs of life be o'er,
“ (Who ever wish'd to live and pine)
“ And let me hasten to the shore
“ Where parted friends and lovers join!
“ Rage then, ye light'nings! hurry to the grave
“ The wretch, whom pity would refuse to save.

IX. “ Ne'er

IX.

- " Ne'er may these streaming eyes again
" The sun's all-cheering orb survey;
" Those streaming eyes would view with pain
" The glories of the golden day!
" No—let the demons of this glooming hour,
" Swift, swift destruction on ARVINA pour.

X.

- " To see once more my natal seat,
" Could it a bleeding bosom ease?
" No, it might aggravate the weight,
" If aught the burthen could increase:
" The sweetest scenes, that once allur'd the heart,
" Would with new poison taint affliction's dart.

XI.

- " But yester morn's gay-smiling beam
" Beheld our troops in bright array,
" Their high helmets shot a radiant beam,
" Flush'd with warm hopes they hail'd the day;
" The car-borne heroes pour'd with eager force,
" While echoed loud the thunder of their courses.

XII.

- " Great SWENO led the destin'd host,
" The lost ARVINA's hoary fire;
" Ah! what avails his valour's boast,
" Ah! what the breast of martial fire?

" Whilst

" Whilst horror hail'd the foe, of death afraid,
" He wav'd with deep'ning rage his blood-stain'd blade.

XIII.

" Alas! how soon, amid the slain,
" The dearest to ARVINA's soul
" Lies stretch'd on RENDRO's loaded plain,
" How soon his eyes in darkness roll!
" From conqu'ring ODRED flew th' avenging steel,
" The rocks loud ecchoed as the hero fell!

XIV.

" Thus the stern Prince of LODA's heath,
" Thus sunk with wounds, a father died!
" Sweet to ARVIN's heart were death,
" To pour her life by SWENO's side!
" Come death, and wrap me in thy dreary shroud,
" Come, and these streaming eyes for ever cloud.

XV.

" Though lost a Father's tender care,
" Though a dear Sire in dust be laid,
" Yet, from the madness of despair,
" MORNO might guard his much lov'd maid:
" Oh, MORNO! from thy eyes, illustrious youth,
" Shone the sweet beams of innocence and truth.

XVI. Thy

XVI.

- " Thy death-seal'd eyes shall now no more
 " In transports on ARVINA gaze,
" Beneath the green o'er shading bow'r,
 " Where Pleasure sang her chearful lays:
" No more in DENMARK, o'er the conscious grove,
" Shall breathing Zephyrs waft the voice of love.

XVII.

- " While welt'ring on the hostile ground,
 " Thy mangled corse unburied lies,
" Haply, with sadly-wailing sound,
 " Thy spirit through the tempest flies!
" Haply it hovers o'er this midnight shade,
" Which glooms all dreary round a captive maid!

XVIII.

- " And thou, my Sire, with sullen air,
 " Where roams, alas! thy wild'ring ghost?
" Dost thou, dear injur'd Shade, repair
 " On wings of winds to DENMARK's coast?
" Thy martial offspring shall avenge thy death,
" And load with hills of slain the groaning heath.

XIX.

- " O'er thy pale corpse one humble stone,
 " Oh! that some pitying hand could raise;
" Some minstrel sigh the fun'ral moan,
 " Sweet as the bards of ancient days:
" Oh!

- " Oh! that thy child could give to thee a grave,
" And steal thy actions from oblivion's cave!

XX.

- " If these weak hands could raise a tomb,
" My MORNO's darkling soul to cheer,
" Or these dim eyes, amidst the gloom,
" Embalm his body with a tear;
" Then would I smiling at the tempest die,
" And yield my spirit with a willing sigh.

XXI.

- " That little pow'r denied, thy Fair
" Waits to the dashing waves, forlorn!
" From yon dim-waving tents of war,
" To these lone walls of horror borne!
" Destin'd, ah destin'd, for a tyrant's lust—
" No! fly Heav'n's hallow'd shafts, and plunge me in the dust.

XXII.

- " Hark! 'tis a hollow sound of woe,
" O'er the dark tow'rs assails my ear;
" Hark! the faint groan of death I know,
" I see the light'ning of a spear!
" 'Tis SWENO, or illusion mocks my eye,
" He gleams half viewless thro' the broken sky."

XXIII. Feebly

XXIII.

Feebly she spoke—and sunk away,
With keenest anguish to the grave!
The pale ghost leaves the struggling clay,
While the last pangs of horror heave!
Thus wrapt around by midnight's howling shade,
Perish'd, alas! the poor distracted maid.

XXIV.

Here oft (as pensive poets say)
Amid these melancholy walls,
ARVINA's ghost is seen to stray;
While many a mould'ring fragment falls:
From yon dim rock her sighs incessant heave,
And join the murmur of the restless wave.

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INCONSISTENCY OF CHARACTER.

THE inconsistency of character that some men discover in the course of their actions has long been a subject for the pens of moralists. Not only grave argument and logical reasoning, but the shafts of wit and satire, have been employed to expose and correct it. Thus it has been set in a serious and a ridiculous light. The pulpit and the stage have combined in its condemnation. But we find, that although in particular instances some useful and good effects may have been produced, the absurdity and evil complained of still exist. Men and women still continue to travel on in the same crooked track their fathers trod; and seem disposed to copy them in every thing except their virtues.

Such is the eccentricity of the human mind, that it fluctuates with every gale of passion. So numerous are the objects that impress and affect it, that as the impulses it receives are various and opposite, so will be the conduct of those whose
actions

actions are not generally regulated by the laws of reason and truth.

Hence it is, that we see the wise man and the fool united in the same person. Men of distinguished abilities, and whose conduct is for the most part rational and commendable, sometimes descend to pursuits and actions which exceedingly disgrace them, and which would admit of but little excuse in the lowest of the vulgar.

CLEON is a Gentleman of sense, sentiment, and virtue. He is good-natured, forgiving, and generous. Yet Cleon has a quickness of temper which disgraces his understanding, and is totally inconsistent with the goodness of his heart. This is his weak side. He has a nice sense of propriety of action, and yet often departs from it in correcting others for the same fault. When his servants fail in their duty, or commit mistakes, he finds it difficult to govern himself, and departing from his own dignity, by venting his momentary passion in language, which when its transport is over he abhors, lessens himself in their eyes, and loses his authority. As soon as his passion subsides, Cleon, conscious of having said more than he ought, is prompted by the goodness of his

heart to over-balance the account with kindness equally unmerited. His servants know, that when he reproaches them for their faults, his tongue utters more than his heart means—more perhaps, than their offences merit; and therefore, considering his reproof as a storm that will soon be over, they are less careful to avoid offending him, than they would be, were he to possess greater equanimity of temper, and render his resentment less violent, but more lasting in its effects.

Cleon should reflect, that rough language is unbecoming a Gentleman, and seldom, if ever, prevents a repetition of the offence in the vulgar. By using it, he only exposes his own weakness, by attacking them with weapons, in the use of which they are better skilled than himself. They soon see his weak side, and take advantage of it to his injury and disquietude. By this means, he frequently is ruffled in his mind, and prompted to say and do things in the heat of passion, which, in his cooler moments, his better sense teaches him to despise.

MELISSA has fine sense, taste, and an elegance of manners, that render her the admiration of one sex, and envy of the other. She is benevolent,
and

and so tender-hearted, that, although a curious enquirer into the works of nature, she will forego the pleasure arising from discovery, rather than kill or torture an insect, by examining its form and structure in her solar microscope. But, cultivated as her understanding, and tender as her heart is, Melissa is both imprudent and cruel. Not a fault of her neighbour's escapes her observation: not a weakness or foible in a friend, but she divulges it with some aggravating circumstances.

Detraction is her favourite passion. Every thing is sacrificed to it; not from any malevolence of disposition, but merely from the love of shewing her dislike of what she condemns in others, and to make the world believe that she is herself free from the faults or foibles she thus exposes, and which nobody suspects her of.

But Melissa should consider, that of all characters, a tale-bearer and detractor are most contemptible;—that her possessing a fine understanding and an elegant taste, does not warrant her to wound the peace and destroy the happiness of her acquaintance, and that she shews great inconsistency and folly, in supposing that the reputation

tation of her neighbours is of less consequence than the life of a fly.

PYLADES is a man who reveres and practises virtue in the general course of his conduct. Nothing can tempt him to do unjustly, or to dispense with the performance of his stated duties. He is however remarkable for doing every good action with the worst grace imaginable. He is charitable, but never relieves a poor person without first making him suffer all the mortification that reproaches and surly treatment can occasion.

If he acknowledges the propriety of a servant's conduct, he will at the same time destroy the pleasure such an acknowledgement might give, by taking care to inform him, that he is entitled to no commendation, because he has only performed his duty; and that had he failed therein he would have merited correction.

If a favour is solicited at his hands, he generally converts it into a debt, by punishing the solicitor till he merits it as a recompence. He never injures others, but endeavours to render himself the object of their fear rather than love. If the actions of persons eminent for their virtues,
are

are mentioned in his hearing, he will be sure to contrast them with some weaknesses, or represent them as mere duties, the performance of which is not entitled to any praise. He is well read himself, but condemns reading in others, and sneers at all modern authors. With the gay he is grave, with the lively he is severe, with the talkative he is mute, and with the silent he is loquacious. An enemy to all refinement of taste, he affects to prefer the uncouth style used in the fourteenth century, to the modern elegancies of composition, and religiously adheres to the same cut of coat which was in fashion at the revolution.

Thus, with good abilities, and a disposition to be useful, Pylades defeats the purposes he wishes to promote, and, by this inconsistency of conduct, renders himself ridiculous.

GNATHO is a man of strict probity in the course of his dealings. He is liberal to his friends, kind to the poor, and possesses near two thousand pounds a year. He looks upon *honour* as the grand governing principle in human actions, and will declaim with great energy on the necessity of preserving it from the smallest blemish. But Gnatho is a virtuoso, and so fond of ancient coins

coins, that when he examines a curious collection, his boasted sense of honour cannot prevent him from pilfering some of the most valuable, if he can do it without detection. What a composition of dignity and meanness is Gnatho! he would not for the world defraud his neighbour of a farthing, or even over-reach him to that amount in a bargain; but at the same time will watch his opportunity to steal a coin on which his brother of the *green-rust* sets the highest value.

CLYTANDER is a man of letters, wit, fine taste, and elegant manners. He has ranged the whole circle of human learning. The arts and sciences are familiar to him. He has investigated nature with successful diligence. All her wonders lie open to his view. Endowed with a strong genius, and a capacious mind, he can trace the natural, moral, and intellectual worlds with ease and rapidity. No man has a higher relish for the sublime and beautiful. No man can define the boundary between truth and error with greater accuracy; or draw the line between what is lawful or improper in human conduct with nicer precision. But, with all these accomplishments, Clytander is a slave to his appetites, and to vanity. He will descend from the "Aonian Mount"

to

to sing catches in the vale of intoxication with every empty-skulled parasite that will flatter him, and hickup out *encore* to his wit and flashes of merriment. He will *keep it up* with the *choice spirits* at a tavern till four in the morning, and then demolish lamps, and knock down watchmen, in his way home, to shew himself *a buck of spirit!*

Does Clytander want to be told, that there is an essential difference between wit and madness;—that to a wise man nothing is so disagreeable as the incense of flattery;—that a man of sense will never listen with pleasure to the praise of fools;—or that fine parts and acquired knowledge will never atone for the want of common prudence, and a course of conduct which would not be excusable in an idiot? He should consider, that by transforming himself into an irrational animal, to gain the worthless eclat of kindred brutes, he forfeits every pretension to that character which his abilities would enable him to sustain; he wants that true merit and excellence from which praise derives its value, and wisdom its only dignity.

PUBLIUS possesses abilities which would qualify him for a Prime Minister. He has made the British constitution, and the arts of government,

his study, from his youth, and understands them better than most of his cotemporaries. In the Cabinet, he is an able counsellor; in the Senate, he is an excellent orator. Thus qualified to act with dignity in the highest station that a subject can fill, who would think Publius could descend to actions, and be pleased with entertainments, fit only for the dregs of the people? But when his attention to public business admits of his retreat into the country, Publius amuses himself with sports that disgrace the lowest understandings.

To drive a pig backward for a wager, to see men run in sacks, eat hot apple-dumplings with their hands tied behind them, or grin through horse-collars, are among the most favourite of his rural pleasures. Of these he is the annual promoter; and, with much apparent satisfaction, he sacrifices to these ridiculous pursuits, that time and those abilities which might be employed in pleasures that are truly rational, and would tend to the benefit of those poor ignorant people whom he thus assembles for the most foolish purposes that the lowest of the vulgar can be employed in.

STRABO has an understanding inferior to few of this age. It was cultivated in his youth by a liberal
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beral education, and by making the Grand Tour. His acquaintance was general in the polite world, and his fortune enabled him to figure in the first ranks of men. In real and personal estate, he has near half a million; yet Strabo is a miser, and one of the most inconsistent misers I have ever known. If you solicit him in behalf of the distressed, he will neither understand you, nor relieve the object. Being advanced in life, he has for many years lived retired at his country-seat, from which he never stirs out on any occasion. Here he lives with only two or three servants, and dozes away his time in useless indolence, or playing cards with a parson or two who have the run of his table. He keeps his carriages on the wheels, although he has not used them these ten years. His horses are become wild foresters for want of employment. He lets his lands lie unimproved, and his timber moulder into touchwood, rather than be at the trouble and expence of improving the one or cutting down the other. His out-houses are all tumbling down for want of repair, but not a shilling will he lay out upon them, although he has had 80,000*l.* lying without interest at the bank for near thirty years, merely to gratify the vanity of being able to command that sum at an hour's warning.

ON THE INSTABILITY
OF STATES AND EMPIRES,
AND CAUSES OF THEIR DISSOLUTION.

THERE is scarcely any thing which conduces more to the humbling of human pride than a general knowledge of ancient and modern history. In these annals of mankind, we see the grand outlines of its spirit and manners in all ages. We may also see the rise and progress, the exaltation and decline, of the most powerful states and empires; and trace the causes of their dissolution from the first rudiments of decay to its final completion.

The prospect we thus explore is, indeed, very humiliating, as it presents little but scenes of chicanery and violence, of horror and devastation. But a review of it may suggest to the attentive mind some instructive and profitable considerations. It will teach us the instability of all human things, and tend to lessen our dependence upon them. It will shew us what man is,
when

when he revolts from that which alone is capable of governing him aright, and is left to the direction and impulse of his own passions. We shall see that every thing beneath the sun is subject to change and to decay. And by observing what the causes were, that brought the greatest empires to an end in former ages, we may learn to guard against them in the present times.

In kingdoms and empires there seems to be a gradual progress to maturity, and also of degeneracy and decay, not unlike that seen in the human body. From a state of infantile weakness, both gradually increase in strength, vigour, and stability, till arrived at the summit of their destined perfection and glory. From this point they progressively decline to a state of obvious weakness and decrepitude, the certain prelude of approaching dissolution.

The fame of the first Assyrian Monarchy is very ancient, it being founded more than two thousand years before the commencement of the Christian *Æra*. It was doubtless very great, and of long duration, yet time, and the imperfection of all human things, brought it to an end.

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The glory and splendor, which it exhibited through a long succession of ages, were all effaced, and its power weakened, by the depravity of the people, and at length totally lost, through their cowardice and treachery, when conquered by the effeminate SARDANAPOLIS.

By the like necessity, arising from causes nearly similar, the great succeeding empire of the Medes and Persians fell, and gave opportunity for the "Macedonian madman" to establish his throne on its ruins.

The Grecian States, while united and governed by the ancient laws of the republic, were the admiration and terror of the East. But their wisdom is departed, and they have long since ceased to terrify: The glory of Athens is laid in the dust!

Tyre, once the "mart of nations," is no more crowded with ships. Her merchants are no longer Princes, nor numbered among the "honourable of the earth." The prophecy of the Evangelical Prophet is accomplished; and where proud navies, freighted with the richest treasures of the East once rode, the fisherman now spreads his nets in solitude and silence.

Thebes,

Thebes, Palmyra, Persepolis, and Balbeck, have long been the seats of desolation, and only present the pensive traveller, who explores the remaining vestiges of their ancient magnificence, with a striking proof of the instability of human things.

Nor has the once mighty Roman empire, or its proud capital, found an exemption from the general fate. It was founded on a basis deemed impregnable to all human attacks, and guarded by laws well calculated to secure its stability and duration. It was long protected and governed by Consuls, Tribunes, and Dictators, eminent for wisdom, probity, and valour. It grew great by the accession of many provinces and kingdoms. Its splendor was increased by the pomp and riches of innumerable triumphs. By successive victories it became so powerful, that for many ages it could not be shaken. But at length the prevalence and effects of luxury sapped its foundations. Through the gradual decay of its military discipline and public virtue, and the influence of ambition and internal discord, its native strength was lost, and its forces were turned upon itself, to the annihilation of its ancient liberties, happiness, and greatness. And although, after these became extinct, the little public virtue which remained in the
breasts

breasts of individuals, was sometimes exerted for their restoration, the attempt was made in vain. By degrees it still declined, like an aged body deprived of its vital nourishment, and was soon totally subverted.

From these causes, and by these gradations, Rome fell, and became an easy conquest to those barbarous nations, over whom her eagles had formerly triumphed. Ignorance and superstition usurped the ancient seats of learning, science, eloquence, and the fine arts, which were now fled for ever. Her temples were sacked, and her tow'ring structures, which had been objects of universal admiration, were demolished, or remained only the defaced and melancholy vestiges of her former glory.

From the instability and imperfection of all sublunary things, a similar fate will probably attend the present, and all succeeding states and nations.

On the best constructed, and most admired fabrics of human wisdom and human pride, *Mutability and Decay* is the universal inscription. A certain portion of greatness, dominion, and glory,
is

is permitted to exist in the world, but this is ever subject to mutation.

It verges, like the light of the sun, from one part of the globe to the other. Succeeding empires are raised on the ruins of those which have fallen. Thus, like the Phœnix in the fable, when one is destroyed, another springs from its ashes.

These reflections, on the rise and fall of ancient states, naturally lead to a consideration of that whereof we are members. As individuals of a community which must sooner or later experience a like change, every man is interested in the enquiry, What tends most to increase or destroy its happiness, to weaken, or give it stability, to destroy or prolong its duration?

The British empire was founded by wisdom, on the rock of liberty. Its constitution is perhaps equal to any that human wisdom can form. It was long protected by a succession of illustrious monarchs, who guarded it as a sacred deposit, and strengthened it by many wise and salutary laws. The people also revered it, and shewed a manly jealousy whenever the least attempts were made to invade it. While this jealousy and public virtue

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remained,

remained, our strength increased, and our wisdom was proverbial in all civilized nations. Hence we became honourable, attained to the summit of our glory, and were feared and respected by all Europe. But, by a sad reverse of conduct both public and private, we now seem to be speedily declining, and to exhibit evident marks of approaching dissolution.

I am not one of those discontented mortals who are daily frightening themselves, and alarming others, with imaginary fears and phantoms, generated by spleen and melancholy. I am neither elated or depressed by the lie of the day, nor subject to the influence of any party. I wish never to seek for disagreeable objects, or to anticipate evils which I cannot shun. But if, by reviewing our past and present public conduct, and looking forward to its consequences, we may guard against them, and, by setting both in a clear point of view, escape the dangers that now threaten us, such a review can neither be improper or unnecessary.

From the history of past ages, it appears that LUXURY has been the original and grand cause of that disorder and ruin in which the greatest States

States and Empires have been involved, and by which they have fallen.

Have we not, therefore, great reason to fear, that, as a nation, we shall experience a similar fate from the operation of the same cause. Luxury, and its constant attendant, imbecillity of mind and body, are the canker-worms of a political state. For these last thirty years especially, their progress has been rapid among all ranks of the people. The superior classes, who ought to be patterns of temperance and virtue, are too generally become examples of prodigality, licentiousness, and dissipation. Luxury, prodigality, poverty, and slavery, are the steps that lead to political perdition. The redemption of those who descend to the third, is seldom attainable. The last is taken to procure the means of existence.

In these vices, the inferior classes of the people have followed their leaders so closely, that, as Shakespeare shrewdly remarks, "the toe of the
"peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier
"that it galls his kibe." This is the case, not only in luxury and extravagance, but most other vices, wherein they seem to pride themselves in being as great proficient as their superiors. So

generally has the depravity spread, that every rank of the people seem to have caused the infection. "The whole head is sick, and the heart faint."

Thus enervated by luxury and the indulgence of vicious pleasure, the public seem to have lost that just jealousy which gives the alarm on the first infringements of liberty, and is its best preservative. They seem lost also to that nice sense of national honour, and virtuous emulation, which are the most powerful incentives to wise and right action.

Neither their own most valuable interests, nor the fate of their posterity, appear now to be objects of much regard or consideration. They view, with an indifference bordering on insensibility, the approach of evils which they have power to avert, but which, if not averted by the revival of ancient wisdom, fortitude, and virtue, will inevitably plunge us in irretrievable ruin. Thus, at a time when the utmost vigilance is necessary, they are slumbering on the brink of a precipice, regardless of their imminent danger.

If we take a brief survey of our present situation, how gloomy is the prospect! The immense bur-
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then of our national debt, and of the heavy taxes laid on almost every article of consumption, is severely felt by all ranks of the people. By the decrease of our commerce and manufactures, and the loss of our colonies and islands, our ability to support this burthen is lessened, in proportion to the increase of its weight. It has been only by an unusual exertion of our national strength, that we have hitherto supported it. But we ought to remember, that whatever is *violent* can be but of short duration. It is an axiom equally true in politics as in mechanics, that "whatever is gained in power is lost in time." We already bend beneath the weight that is laid upon us. If not speedily relieved, we shall sink, and fall to rise no more.

The introduction of French manufactures, frippery, and manners, has almost metamorphosed us into a nation of Frenchmen. The constant drain of our people into the army and navy, and by migrations to other countries, has greatly weakened our strength as a nation. The flower of our army has been sent on a "sleeveless errand" to almost certain death or captivity in America. And, at a time when the strongest Powers in Europe, our natural enemies, are united and uniting against

us, we are, from weakness, incapacity, and dissension among ourselves, less able than ever to oppose and repel them.

To such a pitch is irreligion, and almost every species of immorality, arrived, that it would border on presumption to expect that the arm of Divine Omnipotence will interpose to protect us, especially while we neglect to apply the ordinary means of safety with which we are furnished.

From these considerations, the following conclusion may be justly drawn:—That it highly behoves every man to consider his own care and endeavours, as an individual, essentially necessary to bring about that general reformation on which publick as well as private security and happiness solely depend;—and consequently, that he should be first solicitous to reform his own conduct, and secondly, be jealous of those rights and liberties which are his dearest prerogative; and support them with a decent but manly fortitude, unawed by the frown of tyranny, and uncorrupted by the smile of bribery. Were this the case, all measures of public conduct, which have private interest or ambition for their object, or tend to the establishment of despotic power, would be checked
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in the first rudiments of their existence. That destruction, which now seems suspended over us, might then possibly be averted. Peace and happiness might once more be restored, and again diffuse their blessings around us.

Lord Paget has very sensibly observed, that “power and pomp, purchased by the misery and groans of the people, as it is always detestable, so it is always unsafe.” As freedom is the dearest jewel of life, it inspires with a courage that increases in the hour of danger. Men who are naturally timid in a calm, are often roused in a storm, and gain fortitude from oppression. It is therefore highly incumbent on the rulers of a state, to bear in remembrance, that power and authority gained by arbitrary means, and exerted by men destitute of real greatness and goodness, will be of but short duration.

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QUALIFICATIONS NECESSARY FOR A CLERGYMAN;

Illustrated in the Character of the late Dr. THOMAS WILSON;
Lord Bishop of Sodor and Man.

IN a former essay, I have treated on the qualifications necessary for a Minister of the Gospel, as laid down by the authority of those inspired writings, which every Clergyman professes to believe in, and to be the rule of his conduct.

Since that essay was printed, I have had the pleasure of perusing some of the private papers left by that great and Apostolic Prelate BISHOP WILSON, whose life and conduct was an illustrious comment on the text. As example is often more prevalent than precept or a train of logical reasoning, I beg leave to lay before my readers a brief sketch of his conduct as a Christian Minister, and to introduce a few of his private reflections on what appeared to be his duty in sundry circumstances of his excellent life.

Passing

Passing over the general account of his birth and education, I shall begin my observations at the period when he was ordained a Deacon by the Bishop of Kildare, the anniversary of which he ever after kept holy; and constantly used the following prayer on the occasion, which breathes the language of a heart fervently devoted to the solemn service he had undertaken, and sensible of the only source from whence ability could be obtained to perform it with propriety.

“ALMIGHTY God, who of thy great love to mankind hast given thy Son Jesus Christ to be the author of everlasting life; who, having perfected our redemption, sent abroad into the world his Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, and Pastors, by whose Ministry he gathered together a flock in all parts of the world, to set forth the praise of thy name. For these so great benefits of thy eternal goodness, and for that thou hast vouchsafed to call me, though very unworthy of that great honour, to the same office and ministry, I render unto Thee my most hearty thanks; most humbly beseeching Thee, by the same thy blessed Son, that as Thou hast given me a will, so Thou wouldest give me power and strength to serve Thee in the sacred ministry of thy church unto which I was as on this day called. To this end, give me, O Lord God, I humbly beg, a wise, a sober, a patient, an understanding, a devout, a religious, a courageous heart; that I may instruct the ignorant, reclaim the vicious, bear with the infirmities of the weak, comfort the

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afflicted, confirm the strong; that I may be an example of true piety and sincere religion; that I may constantly speak the truth, boldly rebuke vice, and cheerfully suffer for righteousness' sake. Let my great Lord and Master, let his example, be always before my eyes. Let my days be spent in doing good, in visiting the sick, and helping their infirmities; in composing of differences, in preaching the glad tidings of salvation, and in all the works of mercy and charity by which I shall be judged at the last day.

“ Give me grace and courage that I may never desert my calling, though I should never meet with encouragement from the good things of this world; but let my heart and its desires be there fixed, where true joys are to be found, and rewards laid up for those that serve Thee faithfully.

“ Grant, O Lord, that I may do nothing unbecoming an immediate servant and follower of Christ. Give me strength against all temptations, and especially against such as would draw me to dishonour Thee, and my holy profession; that by me, and by all those over whom I shall be appointed thy Minister, thy holy name may be glorified, thy kingdom enlarged, and that when I shall have preached to others, I myself may not be a cast-away.

“ Bless, O gracious God, all those that labour with me in this great harvest. Thou hast sent forth labourers; O prosper thou our handy work. Bless all degrees and orders in thy holy church, all Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, that in all places they may set forth thy glory, and set forward the salvation of all men. Give us all grace, that we may
often

often and seriously lay to heart the nature and importance of our calling; that these thoughts may make us diligent and zealous, and that our zeal may ever be concerned in matters of real moment.

"O God, look mercifully down upon this church at which I serve at thine Altar; purge all its members from all atheism, heresy, schism, superstition, and profaneness.

"And since thou hast appointed me to live in these times, in which the salvation offered by Christ Jesus is either despised or made ineffectual by divisions of contending parties; grant, O Lord, that I may never be ashamed of thy Gospel, but rather suffer as becomes a good Christian; that I may keep myself steadfast in the true faith, and not be tossed about with any wind of false doctrine, or the craft of men.

"O God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made, have mercy upon all Jews, Turks, and infidels; fetch them home, blessed Lord, to thy flock, and make them one fold under one shepherd.

"In an humble confidence that Thou, O God, wilt graciously receive the petitions of all those, who, in the name of Jesus Christ, call upon Thee; in his name, and for his sake, I most humbly offer these supplications and prayers this day of my ordination; beseeching Thee to say Amen to these my desires, and to all other my petitions, which I shall offer according to thy will, to thy divine Majesty."

In

In the year 1689, we find he was ordained a Priest by the Bishop of Chester. This advancement in the church he looked upon as an event of such consequence, as induced him to form a plan of rules for his future conduct, which it appears he ever after faithfully and religiously observed.

As these rules demonstrate the sincerity and uprightness of his intentions, and the lively sense he had of the importance of maintaining a conduct best adapted to promote the purposes of religion and virtue, both in himself and others, I doubt not their being acceptable to the reader, and I am sure they are highly worthy of imitation.

Certain things to which, after serious consideration, I think fit to oblige myself in the beginning of my days, that I may not be tempted by any worldly advantage to sin against God,—do violence to my conscience,—scandalize that holy profession of the Ministry, to which it has pleased God to call me,—nor bring a curse upon what it shall please him to put into my hands.

First; I resolve never to give any person any manner of bribe or gift, nor make any manner of contract or promise, for a church preferment, though never so good, and the consideration how inconsiderable soever it be.

Secondly ;

Secondly; That I will never give a bond of resignation upon any consideration whatever; being fully persuaded, that when God sees me fit for such an employment, he can bring me into it without subjecting me to those conditions, (which I verily believe are unlawful) and if I can never have any ecclesiastical preferment but upon these terms, I am satisfied it is God's will I should have none.

Thirdly; Considering the scandal and injury of pluralities to the church, I resolve never to accept of two church livings with cure of souls, (if such should be ever in my choice) though never so conveniently seated.

Fourthly; I resolve, that, whenever it shall please God to bless me with a parish and a cure of souls, I will reside upon it myself, and not trust that to a curate which ought to be my own particular care.

That I may not ensnare myself by *residence*, I mean such as the Bishop of the Diocese shall determine not only to be consistent with the laws of the land, but such as an honest conscientious man may venture his salvation upon; because, for ought I know, some such cases there may be.

His Biographer informs us, that “ soon after
“ his ordination, his diligence in the discharge of
“ his pastoral office, and amiable conduct in private life, recommended him to the notice of the
“ Earl of Derby, who in the year 1692 appointed
“ him his domestic chaplain, and preceptor to his
“ son Lord Strange, with a salary of thirty pounds
“ a year,

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“ a year. He was soon after elected master of
“ the alms-house at Latham, which brought him
“ in twenty pounds a year more. His fortune
“ was now far beyond his expectations; and be-
“ yond his wishes, except as it increased his abi-
“ lity to do good. Blessed with a liberal heart,
“ and thoroughly disposed to charity, he made use
“ of the good gifts which God had bestowed to
“ such purposes only as he thought were for the
“ glory of the Great Giver, and the benefit of those
“ in distress. And accordingly we find that he
“ now set apart *one fifth* of his income for cha-
“ ritable uses.”

So strictly conscientious was this excellent man in performing whatever he believed to be his duty, that the fear of men, or of injuring his temporal interest thereby, could not restrain him from it. A memorable instance of this occurs in his conduct towards his patron, Lord Derby.

“ In consequence of an extravagant way of
“ living, and negligent attention to his affairs,
“ that Nobleman became very much involved
“ in debt. This his chaplain beheld with con-
“ cern, and wished to correct and reclaim his
“ Lordship's conduct. It was a point of delicacy
“ —his

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“—his temporal interest might suffer by his honest freedom. His own reflections on this occasion display, in a very pleasing and striking manner, his active benevolence, and his disinterested regard to justice and equity.

Reflections upon my own present Circumstances,

October 21, 1696.

“It has pleased God to call me out of a family, (which, though its honesty and industry, by God's blessing, has secured it from poverty, yet is far from being rich) to a post which my own merits and prudence could never have brought me to. The several steps I have made to this place have been very extraordinary, and such as plainly appear to have been by the direction and goodness of God: from which I cannot but conclude, That since God has thus raised me, it must certainly be for some wise and good end; and that I might be obliged, by all the force of interest and gratitude, to do my duty in this state of life to which I am called. It is true, it may at first sight appear very hazardous to use that liberty and freedom which may seem necessary to advise and reclaim that great man whom I serve. But then I am to consider, that were I really to lose all my expectation, as well as what I have gotten, I am but where I was when God at first shewed me his favour. Nay; my education will still set me above my father's house.

“But this is not what I ought to fear: for cannot God, who raised me without myself, cannot He raise me, or keep

me up, though my ruin should be designed and attempted? And perhaps it may never come to this: for who knows, but God may give a blessing to my honest endeavours? And then I am sure it will be the greatest advantage, as well as honour of my whole life, and an ease to my soul all my days; and if he only falls out with me, and discharges me his family, I have the glory and satisfaction of having done a great good work.

“ Now if I neglect this which I take to be my duty, or for fear of danger, or any temporal consideration, put it off in hopes of a better occasion; I may justly expect that God, who raised me, (it may be for this very purpose) when I am found so backward in his service, will level me with the meanest of my father's house. My fortune is in his hands entirely; and He that could find a way to raise me without myself, can find out a way to ruin me in spite of my best endeavours.

“ And since in my conscience I know that I have not the least pretence to what I enjoy, but all is owing to his providence and goodness, I am his debtor for it; and I have no other way of making a return, but by doing my duty honestly, and leaving the event to God.

“ And may that Eternal Goodness inspire me with a resolution answerable to this good and great design! May no weak and cowardly apprehensions fright me from my duty! May I fear him only, who has power over my soul as well as body, to destroy them both, if I am disobedient to the heavenly command. Inspire me, O God, with a zeal and courage

rage becoming my profession, that I may rebuke vice boldly, and discountenance wickedness wherever I find it, and be jealous for thy glory in the presence of the greatest men on earth. Above all, O Lord Almighty, make me to do some good in this station in which, by thy providence, is my present lot; that when thou shalt please to remove me, (whether for the better or worse, *Thy Will be done*) I may not repent of having done nothing which thou requirest of me. Grant this, O my great and bountiful Lord and Master, for the sake of Jesus Christ. *Amen.*"

The force of these reflections was so strong on his mind, that next morning he waited on Lord Derby in his dressing-room; and after a short conversation on the subject, left with him the following letter:

"MY LORD,

"Nothing but a sense of duty and gratitude could have put me upon taking such a liberty as this, which because I have reason to believe concerns your Lordship, I can willingly hazard all the future favours your Lordship designs me, rather than be unconcerned and silent in a matter of this moment, though I have no reason to fear such a consequence. I do therefore, with all imaginable submission, offer these following particulars, touching your Creditors, to your Lordship's consideration:

First; Though several debts, as your Lordship urges, may be unjust, and perhaps most of the bills in part unreasonable;

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yet

yet it is very probable that a great many are really just; and if these are not paid, those who suffer have a just complaint to God and man, which must certainly have a very ill influence upon your Lordship's affairs.

Secondly; That several in the neighbourhood are undone if they are not speedily considered; they are forced to the last necessity; some to sell their estates, and others ready to leave their country, or to lie in goal for debts which are owing to them from your Lordship. They come every day with tears and petitions, which nobody takes notice of, and so your Lordship never comes to know what they suffer and complain of.

Thirdly; Your Lordship sees what methods the rest who are more able are taking, and you know best what may be the consequence of what they are doing; but however it ends, if their demands are just, they will still have reason to complain of the wrong that is done them.

Fourthly; Your Lordship is never suffered to know what influence these things have upon your temporal affairs; but I am ready to make it out, whenever your Lordship shall think it your interest to enquire into this matter, that you pay constantly one-third more for what you want than does any other person. I know very few care, or are concerned at this; but I am one of those who cannot but see and lament this hardship and misfortune, which cannot possibly be remedied, till your Lordship has taken some order with your Creditors, and reformed those who shall have the disposal of your monies for the time to come.

Fifthly;

Remarks on Bp. Wilson's Character. 373

Fifthly; I am not able to foresee how these things will end, and one cannot tell what they may be forced to attempt. It is too likely, that if any disturbance should happen in the government, their wants may make them desperate, and their numbers insolent. I have been lately told, that some of them have secretly threatened some such thing.

“ And now, my Lord, if I have said any thing unbecoming me, I hope your Lordship will pardon me, and believe it a fault of indiscretion rather than design. I mean honestly; and, that your Lordship may think so, I do protest, in the presence of God, that I had rather beg all my life, than to be so far wanting to myself and that duty which I owe to God and your Lordship, as not to have given your Lordship these short hints by word of mouth and writing, which your Lordship could not possibly have, but from some faithful servant, as I presume to subscribe myself, and, my Lord, your most dutiful chaplain,

“ Oct. 22, 1696.”

T. W.”

“ The consequence of this letter was, that Lord
“ Derby, convinced of the impropriety of his own
“ conduct, and the sincere attachment of his friend,
“ immediately set about a reformation, which re-
“ trieved his circumstances and reputation, and
“ procured speedy relief to his distressed trades-
“ men and dependants.”

How

How exceedingly different was the conduct of this great and good Prelate to that of most in his station. Instead of reposing in idleness and luxury, how anxiously was he concerned to discharge the sacred duties of his pastoral office with integrity and diligence! The promotion of religion, and the good of mankind, were the objects to which his actions uniformly tended. With a mind elevated above this world, and disengaged from its attractions, his affections were fixed on things of eternal moment.

In the various relations of social and domestic life, as well as in his public capacity, he was a shining example of every virtue; and might with propriety adopt the language of the Apostle to his flock, "Follow me, as I follow Christ."

Zealous for the advancement of true religion, piety, and practical virtue, he reproved transgressors with the authority and meekness of an Apostle. Amiable, kind, and benevolent, in his manners, he conciliated the affections even of those whom he *closely* admonished, and deservedly gained the universal love and esteem of his people.

In

In his *Sacra Privata*, or private meditations, we see the undisguised excellency of his heart. Therein are displayed, in a very striking manner, his piety, integrity, reverence, and resignation under the deepest afflictions; and his humble but unshaken confidence in that Divine Being whom it was his delight to serve in time, and on whose glorious attributes his hopes in eternity were founded.

In his public discourses, we find the most interesting truths delivered in that beautiful simplicity of style which the meanest capacity can understand, and the most refined ear must admire. Like the sacred fountain from whence it was drawn, his language is animated, without the pomp of studied eloquence; perspicuous, without tautological verbosity; and perfectly easy, without degenerating into meanness. It is plain, without being tedious; rich in itself, and elegant without decoration.

As his conduct through a long and honourable life was perhaps as near the standard of Apostolical purity as that of any man, so are his writings, the publication of which I consider as a blessing to this age and nation. If there be any thing that
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can generally reach and improve the hearts of mankind, I think they are the best adapted to effect this excellent purpose of any that I have yet had the satisfaction of perusing.

These observations are not the language of panegyrick, but disinterestedly offered to the shrine of distinguished learning, abilities, and virtue; with a view to point this good man out as a pattern worthy of general imitation.

He has long since been removed beyond the reach of human praise, or censure; but his memorial is sweet, and will live in his works to many generations.

THE TEMPLE OF FANCY: A VISION.

C A N T O I.

Yet not in Fancy's maze he wander'd long,
But stoop'd to Truth, and moraliz'd her song.

POPE.

'TWAS Noon; and Phœbus, with meridian ray,
From heav'n's bright zenith pour'd the blazing day.
With heat oppress'd, a sylvan shade I fought,
The seat of peace, of solitude, and thought;
The birds all languid, with enfeebled wing,
In the thick boughs retiring, ceas'd to sing;
Mute was the grove, save where the murm'ring bees
And droning insects hover'd in the trees:
Lull'd by their sound, all indolent, I lay,
To Sleep, who wav'd his poppies round, a prey;
His fascinating pow'r each sense confin'd,
But free remain'd the ever-active mind;
Imagination still her sway maintain'd,
And rov'd aloft, with pinions unrestrain'd.—
And first, methought, on curling clouds I rode,
That hung suspended o'er the foamy flood;
While, low beneath, earth's various kingdoms lay,
In one vast view, transporting to survey.
Here tow'ring mountains, there a verdant vale,
Here cities rise, and there proud navies sail.
With flight superior, then I wing'd my way
Near the bright confines of the source of day:

There, (far above the ken of mortal eyes)
Full in its blaze, a radiant planet lies,
By poets yet unsung; though here resides
The pow'r who o'er their sweetest lays presides.
To this gay region of perpetual spring,
Some pow'r unseen directs my tow'ring wing.
High rose its hills, with lasting verdure crown'd,
And flow'rs immortal deck'd th' enchanted ground :
Here, fountains, spouting in the eye of day
Their silver show'rs, reflect a lucid ray ;
Through blooming groves and sweet enamel'd vales
Breathe gentle zephyrs and Elysian gales ;
Meand'ring streamlets through the meadows glide,
And strains harmonious float along the tide ;
Thick, through the groves, the gilded temples rise
In sacred pomp, and, glitt'ring, seek the skies.
Still, as I rove, my eyes new beauties meet ;
Here the shell'd grot, and there the cool retreat,—
Where roses blush'd, and circling shrubs were gay,
Where Flora sported on the breast of May.

In this retreat (attracted by the sound
Of heav'nly strains) a charming nymph I found
Sweeping a lyre.—To softest notes of love,
Swift o'er the quiv'ring strings, her flying fingers move ;
The thrilling sounds, full, sweet, melodious, roll,
Charm the rapt ear, and captivate the soul.—
My approach she saw ; and, seeking to retire,
Down at her side she dropt the trembling lyre ;
While on her face a blush celestial glows,
In soft suffusion, from the bank she rose.

Anxious to gain the favour of the fair,
I thus address'd her, with submissive air:—

- “ To what new regions are my steps convey'd?
“ What pow'r presides in this delightful shade?
“ Say, Goddess.—For those eyes, that form, proclaim
“ Thee far superior to an earthly name.”——

The nymph with smiles reply'd: “ Know, gentle swain,

- “ The goddess FANCY here extends her reign:
“ Through all these regions is the queen obey'd;
“ She, she, alone is worshipp'd in this shade:
“ Throughout these groves her altars thick arise;
“ Whence curling clouds of incense veil the skies,
“ While crouds unnumber'd on her rites attend,
“ And at her shrine, or in her presence, bend.
“ On yonder hill her tow'ring temple stands,
“ The work of ages, rais'd by FANCY's hands.
“ There she resides, with ever-changeable eyes:
“ Her own creation round in prospect lies.
“ Stately the pile, and wondrous is the scene,
“ Where, hourly varying, dwells the mimic queen.
“ If to explore the mansion you incline,
“ To guide your footsteps shall the task be mine.”

I bow'd assent: The Nymph, with silent haste,
Turn'd quick her step; and through the groves we pass'd;
Through myrtle shades, and amaranthine bow'rs,
That blush'd, all beauteous, with a thousand flow'rs,
Of tints divine: a scene unmatch'd on earth,
Save where great Griffin* gives its beauties birth;

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Whose

* The beautiful plantations of Sir John Griffin Griffin, at his noble seat at Audley-End, near Saffron-Walden, in Essex; which, for true taste and elegance, surpass most in this Kingdom.

Whose sloping hills the waving groves adorn ;
 Whose flow'ry vales shed fragrance on the morn ;
 While grandeur, taste, and elegance, combine,
 And o'er the scene, with art unrivall'd, shine !

Still on we rov'd :—But, near the rising hill,
 Flow'd the clear chrystal of a living rill :
 High o'er the stream a bridge transparent shone,
 Enrich'd with opals bright, and onyx-stone ;
 Through one broad arch, adorn'd with gems and gold,
 With murmurs soft, the limpid current roll'd :
 This pass'd, flow up the steep ascent we bend
 Our lab'ring step : the prospects wide extend.
 Near, and more near, the blazing pile we drew,
 And all its splendors open'd in our view.
 Tow'ring sublime, th' aerial mansion flood ;
 Its rear half-circled by a gloomy wood,
 Where baneful yews, to light impervious, frown'd,
 Whose lengthen'd shades dark horrors shed around :
 Through their brown tops terrific shapes appear,
 With hideous visages and dreadful glare.
 These to describe, exceeds my feeble pen ;
 " For these were forms unknown to mortal men ! " *

CANTO II.

Come, ye bright Maids ! ye blest immortal Nine !
 Whose lyres celestial sound with notes divine
 On Pindus' top ! your poet now inspire ;
 Grant him the fervor of your sacred fire ;

While

* Tasso.

While he, advent'rous, paints the wondrous scene,
And mystic glories of its changeful queen.

Before the wide-extended portal lay
A chrystal lake, where sportive Nereids play,
Leucothoe's train, for wanton wiles renown'd;
With azure hair their beauteous heads were crown'd:
Swift through the waves the shining wantons glide,
Flounce in the stream, or shoot along the tide:
In swelling notes, melodious, now they sing,
And strike their tuneful shells, while round the grottos ring.

The temple's front three hundred columns grace,
Of polish'd stone; but all without a base.
Thick round their lofty capitals entwine
The flexile branches of a mimic vine.
There, quaffing goblets fill'd with juice divine,
With face impurpled, sat the God of Wine.
Through the green foliage glow'd the rip'ning load,
In pendent clusters, grateful to the god;
To right, and left, extending wings were plac'd,
With art and sculpture eminently grac'd.
The walls of purest glass, transparent, shone,
With gems emboss'd, and ev'ry precious stone,
Above the fanes and elevated spires,
With awful grandeur, beam refulgent fires.
One ample room the wondrous pile contains;
Nor without change a moment it remains.
High rose the roof;—a vast stupendous dome!
The spacious vault a thousand lamps illumine:

Set

Set in rich lustres, pendent from on high,
They blaz'd, like planets in an azure sky,

Full in the centre, on a pearly throne,
In gay attire, the goddess FANCY shone.
A vesture, dipt in Iris' brightest bow,
Flows o'er her limbs, and floats in glitt'ring folds below :
With stars of gold was deck'd the beauteous vest ;
And a bright zone confin'd her swelling breast.
A crown resplendent on her temples burn'd,
And glanc'd its lightning round, whene'er she turn'd.
In her right-hand an ivory wand she held,
With subtle pow'r and strong enchantment fill'd,
Upon her left a gay chameleon play'd,
And ev'ry moment chang'd its varying shade ;
Now black, then white, then crimson tints unfold :
Then sprinkled o'er with azure, green, and gold :
Still as she views, its vivid lustre flies ;
Still as she views, new glowing tints arise.

Before the queen an oval mirror stands,
The curious labour of her active hands ;
Ample its size ; of wondrous texture wrought ;
With pow'r endu'd, surpassing human thought.
Round the broad verge, emboss'd in figur'd gold,
The sun, the moon, and shining planets, roll'd :
In change perpetual, day and night arise,
Or clouds o'erspread, or sun-beams gild the skies ;
On this deceptive mirror FANCY gaz'd ;
For in its field she saw whate'er she pleas'd ;

Whate'er

Whate'er in thought her fertile brain design'd,
 (The varying labours of her changeful mind,)
 Whate'er she *wills*, within its orb she spies,
 True to her wish th' aerial visions rise.
 Th' historic walls unnumber'd scenes display'd,
 With matchless art, invaried light and shade.
 These, in their order to describe, require
 The fervent heat of true poetic fire;
 That fire which glow'd in Maro's tuneful page,
 And blaz'd refulgent in the Grecian sage;
 That Tasso felt, when magic scenes he drew;
 Which Lucan thought he felt; and Ovid knew;
 Which shone supreme in Milton's deathless lays,
 And gain'd the mortal man immortal praise.

High on the right, (expressive scene of pain,)
 On the wild margin of the sounding main,
 Laccoon, priest of mighty Neptune, stands;
 His sons invoke the god, with lifted hands;
 And the slain steer lies bleeding on the sands.
 With flaming crests and scales of burnish'd gold,
 Two serpents, dire, the trembling youths infold;
 The wretched father strives to save, in vain;
 Prostrate in death, his children press the plain;
 Next, to the mournful fire they bend their way,
 And round the wretch, with savage fury, play:
 Their circling volumes round his limbs entwine,
 Their fiery eyes with bright'ning ardour shine;
 With hissings dire their forked tongues they dart,
 And send swift poison to his throbbing heart:

Pale

Pale with the madd'ning anguish, now he rears
 His suppliant arms, and heav'n invokes with pray'rs.
 The burning pest, with furious motion, glides
 Through all his veins, and clogs the vital tides :
 In thick short pantings now he gasps for breath,
 Then sinks—a victim to jaws of death.

Here, breathing flames, a dread chimæra stands ;
 And bold Briareus spreads his hundred hands.
 Half-beauteous Scylla sits, and sweetly sings;
 And harpies lean extend their clatt'ring wings.
 There stern Megæra shakes her snaky hair ;
 And hydras hiss, and dreadful sphinxes glare.
 Here tow'ring Polypheme protects his flock,
 And hurls at Greece the rude mis-shapen rock ;
 Launch'd from his hand, the thund'ring ruin flies
 High in mid-air, and whirls along the skies !

The left-hand scenes a silver sea display ;
 Smooth as a lake the peaceful waters lay :
 'There Neptune's dolphin, flouncing in the flood,
 Draws in his pearly car the wat'ry god :
 The mighty trident in his hand he shakes,
 And ocean, through her wide dominions, quakes :
 Around the car the blue-hair'd tritons play,
 And the great sov'reign of the seas obey.
 Near this, the curious artist had pourtray'd
 The tender story of the Lydian maid :
 And fond Narcissus' sudden change appears,
 A flow'r he blooms, each morn bedew'd with tears !

Beneath,

Beneath, the gay Hesperian gardens rise,
With golden apples glitt'ring in the skies:
High in the midst the sacred fleece is seen,
Illustrious, beaming through the vivid green.

An ample space, above, fair Venus fill'd,
And the fam'd goddess of the sev'n-fold shield.
Venus, by snowy doves in triumph drawn,
Or, with her nymphs, disporting on the lawn,
Their queen surrounding, in a radiant ring,
In circling dance, the loves and graces sing.
Unfading youth upon her cheeks was spread,
And a sweet blush that glow'd celestial red:
A heav'n of op'ning charms her face supplies,
And languishingly sweet she rolls her radiant eyes.
Not far remote, behold the glorious car
Of Amphitrite, glitt'ring as a star,
Shines, in bright pomp, along the curling main,
And far around illumines the liquid plain,
High on Olympus' cloud-capt summit lay
The blue-ey'd goddess, and the god of day;
While o'er their head, in swift commission, flies
The nymph whose plumes reflect a thousand, dies.

To left, in deep'ning gloom, a forest wide
Extends its shades, where beasts of prey reside.
There chaste Diana, huntress of the groves,
Arm'd with her iv'ry bow and quiver, roves;
With purple buskins and dishevell'd hair,
Trips the coy maid, majestic in her air:
Around, her nymphs in circling mazes play,
Or at her feet the salvage honours lay.

Deep in a cave, upon the sea-beat shore,
 Stands Vulcan's palace.—Hark! the bellows roar,
 Or seem to roar! while, clad in red attire,
 Beside them stands the sov'reign of the fire.
 Beneath his strokes the sounding anvils ring;
 Thick, from the hissing steel, bright sparkles spring.
 Here the stern Cyclops forge the bolts of Jove,
 Or wait the orders of the queen of love;
 With *those* the giants were, in heav'n, o'erthrown,—
These with immortal arms the great Achilles crown.

But, far above the rest, (an awful sight!)
 'Midst the pure splendor of celestial light,
 On curling clouds, the thunder-grasping Jove
 Serenely sat. — — —
 O'er land, o'er ocean, and th' extended sky,
 Unceasing roll'd his all-pervading eye!
 That eye which darts to earth's remotest bound,
 Through hell's abyfs, and nature's vast profound!
 Which through th' unmeasur'd realms of æther flies,
 Pervades all worlds, and ranges all the skies!
 With radiant aspect, on his right, was seen,
 Majestically mild, heav'n's awful queen.
 Of curious texture, wrought by hands divine,
 The wavy foldings of her vesture shine;
 Azure the ground, embroider'd o'er with flow'rs
 Of growth immortal, in celestial bow'rs.
 Her eyes, that darted love's ethereal fire,
 Beam'd heav'nly lustre on th'eternal fire.

Behind,

Behind, th' immortal steeds and chariot stand,
Which yield to none but bright Saturnia's hand;
Who, when the lash she whirls, with fury fly,
Flame through th' ethereal vault, and kindle half t' hesky.

Here all the wonders of the golden age,
All, all, that lives in Ovid's am'rous page;
That Claudian feign'd, or tuneful Tasso told,
Or Ariosto's labours have inroll'd;
The fairy-scenes that Spenser brought to view;
The magic horrors awful Shakespear drew,
And all th' aerial visions of his mind,
When first he pour'd his *Tempest* on mankind;
All fabled legends, coin'd, in days of yore,
Beneath imagination's forming pow'r,
When *truth* was banish'd from the realms of earth,
And superstition gave wild fiction birth;
In prospect rose.—O'er these her eager eyes
The goddess rolls with pleasure and surprize;
With these enamour'd, she her hours employs
In gay deception and illusive joys.

While here I gaz'd, a lute's harmonious sound
Floats in the dome, and fills the circuit round:
The notes, mellifluous, slowly-tuneful, roll,
And soothe the secret springs of FANCY's soul.
Now in suspension deep the goddess stands,
And drops the magic sceptre from her hands;
Lull'd to soft slumbers, soon her eye-lids clos'd,
Low she reclin'd, and on her throne repos'd.

The lamps grew dim, the scenes began to fade,
 The lustres trembled; fears my breast invade;
 The music ceas'd; a solemn silence reigns
 Through all the temple, all th' enchanted plains:
 When, lo! I saw, from heav'n descending bright,
 A sun-beam darting pure ethereal light;
 And, in the portal, stood a form divine,
 Her aspect sweet, her eyes serenely shine;
 Mature with age; majestic in her mein;
 Though awful, lovely; and, though sweet, serene:
 No gold, nor pearls, no lustre-darting stone,
 Nor gay embroid'ry, on her garments shone.
 Her stately form a snowy mantle grac'd;
 But round her head a radiant glory blaz'd.
 Her *better* hand a pow'rful scepter bore;
 Her *left* she fix'd upon the chrystal door.
 On me, at length, she cast her piercing eye,
 And thus address'd me with a tender sigh:—

“ Why, thoughtless youth, is thy unguarded mind
 “ To FANCY's fond illusions thus inclin'd?
 “ Why stand'st thou here, her phantoms to admire?
 “ Haste; quit her mansion; from her realms retire:
 “ Leave these deceitful regions, and retreat
 “ With me to Virtue's blest immortal seat;
 “ Where no illusive visions mock the eye,
 “ Nor fear's vain terrors prompt the pensive sigh.
 “ *There* real joys in bright succession rise,
 “ And scenes more glorious *there* will meet thine eyes.
 “ In her celestial confines thou wilt find
 “ A spring of peace still rising in thy mind,

“ Whose

" Whose sacred streams will cheer thee in the way
 " That leads to realms of everlasting day.
 " If to my words you pay attention due,
 " And seek the bliss that virtue holds to view,
 " Through life's uncertain maze thy steps she'll guide,
 " And with her treasures thou shalt be supply'd.

" Let not thy soul this kind advice despise;
 " For TRUTH now stands reveal'd before thine eyes :
 " Man to instruct, I left my native skies ;
 " And, if to my instructions you attend,
 " In me you'll find an ever constant friend :
 " My light shall guide thee to that peaceful shore,
 " Where fictions please, and fears alarm, no more :
 " And when, from time and all terrestrial things
 " Releas'd, thy soul expands her trembling wings,
 " I'll safe conduct thee to that blest abode,
 " Where reigns, supreme, ONE UNIVERSAL GOD!"

While thus she spoke, more sweet her aspect grew ;
 Enlarg'd her form; divine her charms renew :
 Beauteous she stood, in heav'nly grace array'd :
 More bright, around her head, the splendors play'd.

Then, with her sceptre, TRUTH the mirror struck ;
 Which instant in a thousand fragments broke.
 Down fell the magic glass, with shatt'ring sound :
 The shining spoils lay glitt'ring on the ground.
 Now, in a moment, all the glories fade ;
 The lamps expire, and sink in empty shade ;

The

The walls and massy columns melt away,
As ice dissolves before the solar ray.
More wondrous still! the goddess, who so late
Majestic shone, in all the pomp of state,
Shrunk to an emmet's size, fled swift away
From the bright blaze of TRUTH's immortal ray!
Now, of the pompous pile, no trace was seen,
Nor aught remain'd of the once potent queen:
The phantoms all were fled, and nought I found
But one vast dreary desert spread around.
Thick sable clouds o'erspread the frowning skies,
And through the gloom the livid lightning flies!
With awful sound the pealing thunders roll,
And shake th' ethereal vault from pole to pole!

With horror chill'd, I fought in vain to fly
From the dire fury of the raging sky;
But soon awoke. With secret joy I rose,
Well-pleas'd to find a period to my woes.

No more in FANCY's regions let me stay;
But dwell with TRUTH, and bless her sacred ray.

DISSECTION OF AN AUTHOR'S HEAD;

A D R E A M.

BEING last night employed in reading the facetious works of the late inimitable Fielding, on laying down the book I fell into a profound meditation on that variety of furniture which is collected in the head of a *professional* writer, to be called forth at his pleasure, and employed for the instructing, amusing, or corrupting mankind.

This reverie terminated in a slumber, in which, although the senses were suspended, the powers of imagination remained active; and like

“ The Poet’s eye in a fine phrenzy rolling, * * * *
 * * * Gave “ To airy nothings
 “ A local habitation and a name.”

Methought an intimate acquaintance invited me to accompany him to a new species of entertainment. I thanked him for his civility, and enquired into the nature of the amusement.

He

He replied, that a few ingenious persons were assembling at a certain house to attend the dissection of an *author's head*; adding, that as he was a *full-fledged one*, and the operation was to be performed *secundum artem*, some interesting discoveries might be expected.

The novelty of the experiment raised my curiosity, and I immediately attended. On entering the room, in which were many spectators, we saw a head lying on the table. The face, "if face it might be called," bore a strong resemblance to that of the "Knight of the woeful countenance" as described by the inimitable Cervantes.

The dissector soon approached with his apparatus of instruments, a bright lamp, and a microscope for examining the minute parts. These being properly arranged, he prepared for the operation: but first seizing the head with an air of exultation, and turning it round and round like a barber's block on its pivot, he made the following harangue to the company:—

"The subject before you, Ge'men, is the head
"of an author, and, I assure you, one of no mean
"class. He had the honour to be *hackney writer*
"to

“ to certain booksellers, and paragraph-maker for
“ several newspapers. He has written (or rather
“ fabricated) many volumes on physical, moral,
“ theological, philological, political, polemical,
“ geographical, historical, ontological, mytholo-
“ gical, comprehensible, and incomprehensible
“ subjects, that will render his name immortal by
“ exalting it to the summit of that column of
“ fame, which is invulnerable to the tooth of
“ time, and shall remain secure and unimpaired
“ when the brittle memorials of brass and marble
“ shall crumble into dust!”

Then laying the head with the face downwards, a notch being cut in the table to receive the nose that it might lie secure, the operator flourished his amputating knife, and began. After repeated efforts, he with much difficulty made an incision from the top of the *sinciput* to the nape of the neck, dividing the skull, till each side falling down, lay flat on the table. The brain, which in other animals is soft, and has the external appearance of the paunch of a cod fish, appeared to be dry and shrivelled like an old bladder. It was also so small, that instead of filling the cavity nature had formed for its reception, it might have been contained within the shell of a walnut.

The internal substance of the *Cerebrum* was entirely wasted, and the external had not only the appearance of, but was really turned to, ashes. Hence it was plain that the communication of the nerves to the *Medulla Spinalis* being broken, there could be no connection between the head and the heart.

On removing the *corpus callosum*, the *lateral ventricles* appeared:—In the right was a large quantity of black bilious matter, of a very corrosive quality. Some of this being spilled on the operator's coat-sleeve, not only stained it to such a degree that no water would wash it out, but in a few minutes ate holes in the cloth. At one corner was a small phial inscribed "The milk of human kindness," but quite empty.

In the left *ventricle* (from which a small *duet* led to the tongue) was a bladder containing some liquor which appeared to be gall and vinegar mixed. On the neck of the bladder we found a label, on which was written "principally spent in criticism and satire."

The principal cavity of the *cranium*, which ought to have been occupied by the medullary substance

substance of the brain, was filled with somewhat which at first sight might have been taken for the brain itself. It was however found to be solid, but on being handled it broke into a great number of laminæ or plates like talc, which were covered with very small characters.

On viewing these in the microscope, we found them to contain a variety of quotations from the ancients; but so mutilated, patched up, and jumbled together, that it was impossible to discover their meaning. We supposed this to have been the author's store-room or ware-house for *run goods*, where he secreted his plunder and moulded it afresh, to disguise the theft, and avoid detection.

We then examined the fourth ventricle in the *Cerebellum*, expecting to find the *glandula pinealis*, or Descartes' seat of the soul, which is generally about the size of a pea. We looked a long time in vain, and began to think those were right who had placed it at the *other extremity*; but at length perceived a little black speck, about the size of a *mite's egg*, adhering by a capillary ligament to one corner. With the utmost care we separated it from the fibres, and placed it under the microscope, when to our astonishment, it began

to heave, and soon dilated itself to the size of a *puff ball*, and bursting with a loud bounce, it evaporated in smoke!

Hence we concluded that its extension was nothing new; that it never had been able to bear examination in a strong light; and that its being so distended on a former occasion by vanity and pride, had occasioned the death of the author.

On separating the *meninges*, within the *cranium*, we found a thin partition smooth as vellum, on the top of which was written "Materials for "Poetry." It was divided and intersected by a variety of straight lines, in the open spaces between which we perceived some confused scratches, so small as not to be legible. On applying them to the microscope successively, we found one to contain a set of metaphors and similes; a second, rhymes ready tagged; a third, descriptions; a fourth, epithets without number; a fifth was filled with acrostics, riddles, rebusses, and epigrams. The last we examined contained a novel in embryo, which (like Pythagoras's stamina of a human form in the head of a horse-bean, that lay closed up in its membranes till a new-created soul wanted

a tenement) waited for the obstreperous hand of some bookseller to midwife it into the world.

In short, the whole was such a chaos, that we doubted from its disorder, and the large importation of foreign goods, whether our author in any part of his life had much stock of his own. This doubt was soon solved; for on looking down to the bottom of the *medulla oblongata*, we found a little cell with a valve before it, inscribed "The repository of my own ideas." This discovery whetted our curiosity. We longed to see something of our author's own. The operator therefore removed this part with the utmost caution, lest any of the furniture should escape; but on raising the valve we found the cell almost empty. At the bottom, however, there were a few crooked things unlike any we had seen before. They were remarkably heavy, and would have balanced leaden bodies of equal dimensions. On applying them to the microscope we found them all labelled. Of twelve which we examined, the following were the inscriptions :

1. Man a mere machine.
2. The world is eternal.

3. The

3. The world one vast animal.
4. There is no such a thing as *matter* in the universe.
5. The universe, and all the beings it contains, are *material*.
6. Souls all created in Adam, and transmitted from parents to children *ex traduce*.
7. Human souls all laps'd and fallen from a state of pre-existence.
8. Ridicule the only test of truth.
9. Polygamy the best means of securing innocence from seduction.
10. Pleasure and pain only ideal.
11. Lying, lawful in authors and statesmen; perjury, in officers of the revenue, and priests when matriculated.
12. The dignity of the human character best displayed by men's making monkies of themselves, and dupes of others.

From the nature of this sample our curiosity was abated; and we were pleased to find that these notions had no better origin, and appeared so little worth. But being desirous of proving their *solidity*, we held them close to the light of the lamp,

lamp, when notwithstanding they at first appeared so ponderous, they all vanished in an instant into a thick vapour, and were lost for ever!

On examining the avenues to the ear, we discovered a curious phenomenon. Concealed by a thin membrane in the corner of a cell, sat a female figure blowing a trumpet, from the mouth whereof was a winding passage, through which the sounds were carried to the drum of the ear; but in such an oblique manner as to make the hearer think they proceeded from *without*. Looking accurately at this figure, we saw written on its forehead *Vanity*, and on its trumpet *Fame*. Hence we were inclined to believe that what our author mistook to be public praise, was only the deceptive strains of this lying musician within.

Behind each eye was a large cavity filled with a transparent fluid, in which swam a number of minute balls painted over with ideal scenes of wealth, happiness, and pleasure. From these cavities we traced two small transparent tubes, which passed between the *optic nerves* and the *ligamentum ciliare*, through the *cornea*. Along these tubes the little balls continually passed and repassed, by which means their fictitious imagery was successively
painted

painted on the *retina*, and the deceived author thought them realities. Hence he was continually amusing himself with fallacious prospects, which he apprehended were *real* and within his reach, till awakened from his dream by the anguish of disappointment.

We were going to make some farther discoveries, but the head emitted so offensive a smell, and appeared to be in such a corrupted state, that quitting the room, and my dream together, I awoke to a more agreeable entertainment.

AN EVENING WALK,
WITH REFLECTIONS.

“ These are thy glorious works, Parent of Good !”

MILTON.

TO men of refined taste and sentiment, who are engaged in the bustle of commercial life, there is not any thing more pleasing than to retire from the busy throng, and enjoy the calm delights of solitude and contemplation.

Of this class is my friend ERASTUS;—in him the man of business and of study, the polite gentleman and the philosopher, are united. He is capable of transacting commercial affairs with accuracy, of mixing in the polite circle with elegance of manners, and of tracing the academic grove with dignity. When fatigued with the business of the day, it was usual with him at the approach of evening to leave the town, and range the more delightful fields that surround it. In

these calm scenes of instructive meditation he employs those hours which the miser devotes to care, and the libertine to folly; and therein finds that satisfaction of which *they* can form no idea.

Being lately on visit to him in the country, he did me the honour of admitting me to share the pleasures of his evening ramble.

It was in the month of May: The country was beautifully diversified with hills and vales, woods and waters; and dressed in all the pride of re-animated nature. The sun had nearly finished his diurnal course: as he approached the horizon, a range of fleecy clouds, romantically formed, became irradiated with the most brilliant and glowing colours. The other parts of the heavens exhibited an immeasurable field of un sullied azure.

Intent on the scenery around we imperceptibly gained an eminence, whose top commanded a view of the Western Ocean. Soon as we reached the summit of the hill, the grandeur of the prospect struck us with admiration and awful astonishment. Our eyes roved alternately over the varied landscape on either hand, the ample canopy above,
and

and the restless world of waters that was spread before us!

The mildness of the *blue serene* heightened the brilliancy of the gold-fringed clouds which interlaced the horizon. The rays of the sun strongly illumined the rocks and shelly shores with their departing lustre; and streaming in an oblique direction, played on the gently-waving surface of the deep with trembling radiance, and presented "a sea of glass mingled with fire."

At the first view of scenes so striking and magnificent, the mind is usually overwhelmed with a tumult of wonder and delight:—a confusion of images, a rapid succession of ideas, for which language wants a name;—a transport of astonishment which seizes all the faculties of the soul. But by degrees the sensations become less violent and more pleasing: astonishment is succeeded by a calmer delight, and transport subsides into reverent and pleasing admiration.

The fervor of the sun's beams was now sweetly attempered with a gentle refreshing breeze from the ocean,

"Mild as when Zephyrus on Flora breathes,"

just moving the foliage of the groves, and waving the green surface of the corn with easy undulations. The birds had ceased to pour forth their melody, and were retiring to their leafy mansions. Newly eased of their milky burthens, or unyoked from the toils of day, the beasts were cropping the luxuriant herbage. The flocks that of late whitened the downs, were now assembling in their folds. The sea-mews were returning from their excursions over the surface of the deep, to resume their lodgments in the cliffs. All was calm and serene.

The health-inspiring mildness of the air, the soft and solemn silence that hovered over the face of nature, and the magnificent scenery in prospect, concentrated our thoughts into a sweet tranquility, friendly to contemplation. We were led to reflect on the Wisdom, Majesty, and Greatness of that All-perfect and Infinite Being, whose Almighty *fiat* spoke all the beauteous scenes of the universe into existence.

While engaged in reflections of this kind, the sun quitted our hemisphere to revisit other lands, and pour returning day on the remotest regions. The full moon in milder radiance spread her lucid
mantle

mantle over the world, and “shadowy set off the
“face of things.”

The bright assemblage of varied dyes which of late so strongly irradiated the western hemisphere, were departed with the sun; and the clouds in that quarter presented the appearance of a range of opake mountains, whose varying outline was fringed with silver. The stars of largest apparent magnitude now lit up their urns to decorate the azure canopy. Every moment their number increased;—the various constellations gradually appeared in bright succession; and

“A flood of glory burst from all the skies.”

ERASTUS, who had been some time silent, now awoke from his reverie, and broke forth in a rhapsody to the following import:—

“What a scene of magnificence and solemn grandeur do we now behold:—worthy a Deity to create; and a source of adoring wonder to men—to angels! How infinitely transcendant is that Being who formed these immense globes, and whose breath lighteth up these celestial fires! See innumerable worlds rolling in harmonious order, through a space which even the imagination can-

not

not bound, and proclaiming the power, wisdom, and workmanship of the Almighty. They bring to my remembrance that beautiful and sublime address which the enraptured Psalmist presented to God on the consideration of these striking objects: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and stars which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that thou visitest him?" When he beheld the glory displayed in the creation; when he reflected on that inconceivably surpassing splendor which fills the more select apartments of JEHOVAH's empire, the heaven of heavens; and contemplated the adorable attributes of its Eternal King, he was struck with amazement at the infinite disparity between the creature and its Creator! It led *him*, and if we attend to it, it will lead *us*, to repress the aspirings of ambition, and to prostrate our souls with the deepest reverence before Him who formed us, and "who remembereth that we are but dust."

"Oh, thou First Eternal Cause! Thou uncreated Source of Light, Intelligence, and Perfection; whom the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain! By one act of divine volition, Thou hast realized thy own eternal ideas in creation; and beamed
them

them forth in a boundless scene of actual being, for the contemplation, use, and happiness of all intelligent natures, and the manifestation of thy glory! In goodness inexpressible, Thou hast created an innumerable family, and placed them in the various parts of thy vast empire to fill up the measure of universal happiness. Thou hast adapted every rank of thy creatures to that peculiar station which thy wisdom has assigned them, and endowed them with perceptions and faculties capable of lasting enjoyment.

“ Every apartment of the universe is replete with signatures of thy power and wisdom. Thou hast distributed thy blessings with unbounded munificence, and rejoicest in the joy of thy creation. All nature is thy temple, from which the language of praise incessantly ascends to Thee from the various gradations of existence:—from the highest orders of celestial spirits that enjoy the brightest splendor of thy beatitude, down to the lowest reptile that creeps in the dust. Thou hast endued man with faculties capable of attaining the knowledge of Thee, and illumined his understanding with a ray of thy sacred light to direct his steps in the path that leads to glory. “ Although
“ thine essence is hid from finite view; in the
“ things

“things that are seen” we discover thy divine perfections.

“In this amazing display of thy wisdom, power, and goodness, they are amply exhibited. When in contemplating them we exalt our minds to Thee;—when we consider thy greatness, and thy goodness;—when we remember our own frailty, and frequent revolting from under the government of thy sacred laws, we are “covered with “blushing and confusion of face.” But when we remember that mercy is thy darling attribute, we are encouraged humbly to hope and trust in Thee, the God of our salvation.

“May thy wisdom still direct our steps, and thy providence still preserve us through the uncertain paths of life. Awaken us to diligence in the great business of the day. Shield us from every danger, and keep us from falling in the hour of strong temptation. May nothing alienate our affections from thee, the only proper object of our love and adoration; or tempt us to act inconsistently with thy sacred Laws.

“Oh, thou Eternal Fountain of Light and Truth! disperse the mists of sensuality, which
at

at times envelope our minds, and irradiate our reason with thy glorious light. Enable us to see our own meanness and dignity;—*meanness* as frail imperfect beings, and *dignity* as thine offspring, endowed with faculties immortal in their nature, and capable of everlasting improvement. Let thy holy eternal truth be the only rule of our actions. Purify us throughout in body, soul, and spirit, and enable us to dedicate the remains of life to thy service.

“ Let us never forget that the great end of our being is to glorify Thee here, and finally to enjoy a blessed communion with our *elder brethren* in glory hereafter. When this happy period shall arrive, and we are ‘ clothed with immortality,’ perhaps scenes inconceivably more glorious than those we now behold will successively open on our enlarged faculties, and become the objects of our contemplation for ever. Then, perhaps, all the seeming contrarieties in nature, all the now inexplicable problems that arise in the œconomy of thy general providence, will appear to be harmonious order and wisdom.

“ While we thus contemplate thy works, and the end of our being, let every faculty of our

souls adore and worship; not with an enthusiastic fervor, but a rational, reverent sense of thy greatness. May no intrusive thought, no mean idea, or sordid passion, divert us from thinking on, and obeying Thee, the only proper object on which our best affections should ever centre! That while we pensively tread the path appointed us in this scene of being, we may experience an increase of that faith which anticipates the joys of eternity; and, with the hand of hope, lay hold on eternal life.

“ Oh thou Supreme! by what name shall I call thee!

“ Thou Source exhaustless of created things!

“ Omniscient! Omnipotent! and Eternal!—

“ At thy right hand sits Majesty enthron'd;

“ And on thy left immortal pow'r resides!

“ All nature waits attentive to thy nod,

“ And light-wing'd angels, charg'd with thy behests,

“ Fly to the bound'ries of the vast creation,

“ Leaving tir'd thought behind!

“ OH THOU OF ALL!

“ Tho' high in Heav'n above the starry sphere

“ Thou reign'st supreme, in Majesty divine,

“ Illume our darkness with thy glorious light,

“ And raise our souls to Thee; that when the end

“ And measure of our days shall be accomplish'd,

“ This spark celestial may return to Thee,

“ And join its Glorious Fountain in the blaze

“ Of an Eternal Day!”

REMARKS

REMARKS ON MR. LOCKE's AND DR.
MIDDLETON's WRITINGS.

“ Behold, and reverence !”

Dr. YOUNG.

THE justly celebrated John Locke, having left some passages not altogether explicit in his admirable essay on the human understanding, was charged by the Bishop of Worcester, and some other high Churchmen of those times, with holding the *materiality*, and consequently of denying the *immortality*, of the soul.

To this illiberal charge Locke replied in a manner that at once shewed the depth of his understanding, the acuteness of his wit, and the goodness of his heart. In his reply to the Bishop, sound reasoning and keen satire are blended with the knowledge of a profound philosopher, and the politeness of a gentleman.

He has sacrificed priestcraft without wounding christianity, and the instrument he used had so

fine an edge, that the operation was not painful. But notwithstanding this defence, some bigots in that, and others in the present age, represented him as a secret favourer of the above-mentioned principles.

This was doubtless the effect of jealousy, envy, and resentment:—Jealousy of the honour he so justly acquired; envy which had for its object abilities they could never equal; and resentment for his assisting men to see and think for themselves, by affixing in the clearest manner the boundaries of *Faith* and *Reason*. By this he weakened that implicit and superstitious dependance which former ages had on their *spiritual guides*, and taught men the propriety of judging freely for themselves in matters of religion. Hence, most probably, sprung the invidious charge of deism against him. It is however well known that the charge was unjust, and that this great ornament of his age and nation was a *real christian*.

His paraphrase on the New Testament, and other writings, prove this to a demonstration. He revered the doctrines of the gospel, and exemplified their efficacy in his own excellent conduct. For many years before his death he retired from
the

the busy scenes of public life, to Oates in Essex, then the seat of Sir Francis Masham; where he applied himself almost wholly to the study of the Scriptures. In those invaluable oracles of instruction and sacred truth, he found that consolation which the most admired productions of *human* genius then failed to yield him.

When on his death-bed, he wrote a letter to Collins, in which is the following strong emphatical sentence: "This life affords no solid satisfaction but the consciousness of doing well, and the hopes of another."

But so deeply were the principles of infidelity rooted in some minds, that the experience and closing attestation of so great and good a man appear to have had no proper effect upon them.

Accordingly we find, (as the author of "*Voltaire in the Shades**" tells us) that Dr. Middleton treated this sentence in Locke's letter with contempt. He thought it beneath the dignity of a *moral* philosopher to express any concern about, or expectation of a future state of existence.

Hence

* A Gentleman of Oxford.

Hence he considered that consciousness and hope as the effect of a mind heated by enthusiasm.

Dr. Middleton, although inferior to Locke, was a man of great learning and abilities. His writings hold a distinguished place in the republic of letters. His "Free enquiry into the miraculous powers" is a learned and able exposition of the mummerly and superstition that disgraced christianity in early ages. But this excellent work would have been still more valuable, had he not, in attempting to invalidate the pretended miracles of the Romish Church, made use of arguments that tend to destroy the credibility of *of those really wrought* by the Apostles, and their immediate successors.

In his introductory discourse, page 91, he expressly declares, that "There is no sufficient reason to believe, from the testimony of antiquity, that *any* miraculous powers did *ever* actually subsist in *any* age of the Church after the times of the Apostles."

And again, "I shall endeavour to evince, by particular facts and testimonies, that the pretended miracles of the primitive Church were
" *all*

“ *all mere fictions*, which the pious and zealous fathers, partly from a *weak credulity*, and partly from reasons of *policy*, believing some perhaps to be *true*, and knowing all of them to be *useful*, were induced to espouse and propagate for the support of a righteous cause.”

Here we find that Dr. Middleton has, with one dash of his pen, included all the primitive fathers under the character of *weak* and *credulous*, or of *designing impostors*.

He has here asserted (contrary to the united testimony of numerous eminent historians, and early writers, whose authenticity is in other matters generally allowed) that the miracles recorded to have been wrought in the early ages of the Christian Church, were *all mere fictions*. I have no doubt but that *many*, perhaps *most* of these miracles were spurious, propagated for the emolument, and to support the interest and authority of a superstitious and avaricious priesthood: but I cannot, without offering violence to my own understanding, and to the general sense of mankind, suppose this to have been the case with *all*. An imposition so widely diffused, and so long continued, could scarcely have remained undetected
among

among the most savage and barbarous people, and much less in countries where knowledge and learning began to flourish, and where the religion these miracles were wrought to support, and evince the truth of, had so many crafty and inveterate enemies.

Are the testimonies of St. Ambrose, Arnobius, Theophilus Bishop of Antioch, St. Augustine, St. Basil, the venerable Bede, Chrysostom, Clemens of Alexandria, St. Epiphanius, Evagrius, Grotius, Gregory the great, St. Jerome, Justin Martyr, Josephus, Irenæus, Lactantius, Athenagoras, St. Cyprian, Minutius Felix, Origen, Le Moine, Philo Paulinus, Theodoret, Tertullian, Tacitus, Suetonius, M. de Montgeron, Collier, Bishop Jewell, Dionysius Bishop of Alexandria, Dr. Chapman, Dr. Lardner, Dr. Berriman, Archbishop Wake, Fisher Bishop of Rochester, Dr. Brooke, Dr. Waterland, and Mr. Whiston, of *no authority*? Are all these men, with many others that might be added, to be considered as *weak, credulous, or vile impostors*? This must be the case, if Dr. Middleton is right. Is it not far more probable that he should have been mistaken, than that all these men should have declared and written, what they either *took merely on trust, or knew* to be false?

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Was the Christian religion so *fully* established, and generally received, in the time of the Apostles, as to render any farther exertion of those miraculous powers, which were the strongest *external* proofs of its divinity, quite unnecessary? Or did such an immediate depravity spread itself over the Christian world, on the death of the last Apostle, that no man after them had sufficient veracity to obtain credit for his assertions? Was there no account, after the canon of Scripture was filled up, authentic enough to be relied on? Are all the events recorded by the above-mentioned writers *mere fictions*, the phantoms of a heated imagination, or the lying wonders of monks and priests? I think it would require no less evidence than that of a miracle to gain the general assent of mankind to such uncharitable suppositions; and yet all these must be allowed, if we admit in their full force and extent the sentiments of Dr. Middleton.

The Doctor has indeed admitted the reality of those miracles recorded in the New Testament. Of these, and those who wrought them, he makes frequent and honourable mention, with becoming reverence. But here he supposes, nay *asserts*, miracles to have ceased, and the power by which they

were wrought to have been withdrawn from mankind. And in his attempt to disprove the reality of those said to have been wrought since the Apostles' days, he has, *incautiously* at least, applied arguments which tend to invalidate the former.

After having respectfully mentioned some of the martyrs (Free Enquiry, page 213) he adds, that "martyrdom, while it gives the strongest proofs of the sincerity of their faith and trust in the promises of the gospel, adds nothing to the character of their knowledge and sagacity, nor consequently any weight to their *testimony*, in preference to that of any other just and devout christian whatsoever."

This sentiment is doubtless just in itself; but the purpose for which it was introduced here seems to be that of weakening their testimony respecting the facts *they* had attested, and which *he* denies. At least it has this tendency; and the argument operates equally against the testimony of the *Apostles* relative to the miracles wrought in their days. If the testimony of dying martyrs has no weight *since* the Apostles' days, that of the Apostles themselves may be equally doubted, because the *sincerity* of the former was, unquestionably, equal to that
of

of the latter. Consequently *one* proof (or what is generally admitted such) of the authenticity of the Apostles' testimony (which they also confirmed by martyrdom) is hereby greatly weakened.

Again, Dr. Middleton says, (Free Enquiry, page 218) "A pretension to miracles has in all
"ages and nations been found the most effectual
"instrument of impostors towards deluding the
"multitude, and gaining their ends upon them."
Does not this argument operate against the pretension to it in the *apostolic* as well as *later ages*, and tend to destroy its credibility in both?

The Doctor also tells us, that "Dionysius of
"Halicarnassus is esteemed one of the most
"faithful and accurate historians of antiquity,"
and yet *laughs* at the miracles he has recorded.
This he may have done perhaps without considering that upon the same principle others may laugh at the miracles recorded by those accurate and faithful historians the Apostles.

Many of the antient Fathers, and other early writers, have recorded miracles of which they declare themselves to have been *eye-witnesses*. They doubtless possessed their senses of *seeing* and hearing

as perfectly as Dr. Middleton. Yet according to him, they are not to be credited, although men of the greatest piety and sincerity. If this be admitted, I think the argument operates with equal force against the testimony of the Apostles, who might, by the same rule, be mistaken also. This, however, the Doctor denies; but has not shewn how the mistake could be prevented in one case more than in the other.

According to Dr. Middleton, the Fathers are to be read like Livy and Dionysius. If so, why not the Apostles? There appears but little disparity between them in point of sincerity.

But “ If (says Butler in his Analogy) great
 “ numbers of men, not appearing in any degree
 “ weak, nor under any peculiar suspicion of negligence, affirm that they saw and heard such
 “ things plainly with their eyes and ears, and are
 “ admitted to be in earnest, such testimony is
 “ evidence of *the strongest kind we can have* for any
 “ matters of fact.”

Another argument brought by Dr. Middleton against any miracles having been wrought since the days of the Apostles, is “ the disagreement
 “ of

“ of English divines about the precise æra of the
“ continuance of the miracles in the Christian
“ church.”

But if, from the diversity of sentiments found amongst modern divines, he could prove the invalidity of them; we might as easily prove, by the same arguments, the invalidity of christianity itself, or indeed of any other truths except those that are purely mathematical. Christianity has been differently explained by almost all its defenders. Scarcely any of the expositors of the bible have agreed exactly even in points deemed essential.

Are not divers of the most remarkable and interesting events mentioned in the New Testament related very differently, even by the four Evangelists and the Apostles?—For instance: many of our Saviour’s acts and expressions, his death and resurrection, and the conversion of St. Paul? According to the Doctor’s reasoning, these are not to be credited, because there is not a perfect coincidence in the accounts we have of them.

Charity induces me to hope he did not foresee the consequence of his own arguments, or at least intend any thing hostile to the cause of christianity.

In

In learning, sincerity, and ingenuouſneſs, he was equal to moſt in his time. But in his zeal againſt ſuperſtition, he has left many expreſſions ſo unguarded as to raiſe him many enemies, who have attacked his writings with undeſerved ſeverity.

I am however always ſorry to ſee writers of diſtinguiſhed abilities leave the leaſt room for ſuſpicion, that they hold principles inconſiſtent with that ſyſtem of religion which the Son of God came to promulgate and eſtabliſh among mankind; and to the truth and excellency of which ſuch a croud of illuſtrious witneſſes have given full attestation.

The ingenious author of the “*Essay on Original Composition*” has given us a ſtriking inſtance of the hope and confidence which chriſtianity inſpires, in an anecdote of the great Addiſon. This excellent man, when on his death-bed, ſent for a young gentleman whom he had honoured with his frienſhip, but who appeared to have entertained ſome doubts reſpecting the truth of the chriſtian religion. He came, and with a mixture of eſteem and reverence ſaid to Addiſon, “If you have any commands for me, ſir, they ſhall be held ſacred.” Mark the reply;—it was more expreſſive than the moſt admired periods of ſtudied eloquence—

eloquence—more convincing than the most subtle series of logical reasoning on the subject. “ I sent “ for you, sir, (said he, grasping his hand with the tenderest affection) “ to let you see in what peace “ a christian can die;” and soon after, he expired.

If the excellency of christianity, and its happy effects on mankind wanted any further display than is exhibited on an impartial enquiry into its true nature, to render it the proper subject of universal esteem and reverence, the attestation of such men as Locke and Addison would be a sufficient testimony. They were men whom none can accuse of being enthusiasts. They stood conspicuous in the first rank for genius, learning, and penetration; and their conduct generally demonstrated them to have been influenced by a steady masculine piety.

They had ranged the extensive circle of the sciences, and trodden the slippery paths of greatness with wisdom, and with safety. They employed their talents in works calculated to improve the understandings and hearts of mankind. They united the flowers of science with the maxims of religion and piety, and animated others to virtue by their own example.

On a most accurate investigation of the evidences for the christian religion, these men received full conviction of its truth, and the reality of its rewards. In their most serious moments, with eternity in prospect, they declared it was *this alone* which *then* gave them satisfaction. They were not in a painful state of uncertainty, "what variety of untried being" they were to pass through, but possessed a stedfast hope that was "full of immortality." Of these illustrious characters, it may truly be said, they were shining lights in a dark world:—their sun sat in that brightness which was only the harbinger of a more gloriously perfect day; and their memories will be revered by the wise and virtuous throughout succeeding ages.

Happy would the consequence be, if a review of these great examples could excite mankind to emulate them in acts of morality, virtue, and religion.

If happiness, if fame, if honour, are worth our pursuit, this will be the best and easiest method of obtaining them;—it will render us honourable here, and afford unfailing assurance of an happy immortality.

The

The libertine in principle and practice may, if he pleases, call the restrictions of virtue and religion *fetters of priesthood*, and exult in his own supposed freedom: but the truly wise man, from a more just and elevated turn of thought, will revere those laws which were given to guard him from destruction; and gratefully accept the guidance of that hand which is graciously extended to conduct him in safety through the jeopardies of time to a future inheritance in glory.

ON PUBLIC DIVERSIONS.

“ There blushing roses oft conceal the thorn
 “ That lurks beneath, and wounds the breast of virtue.”

ANON.

THE subject of public diversions has given birth to much sophistical argument, and well-meant declamation. The man of pleasure, the devotee, the wit, and the philosopher, have respectively viewed and treated the subject according to their own feelings, turn of mind, and knowledge of men and things. Hence they have alternately vindicated and condemned, either with a partiality dictated by the mere love of amusement, or with the censoriousness of a contracted, gloomy, and cynical mind.

In the following observations, I am not biased by either opinion; both have been carried to the extreme, and all extremes are dangerous. I shall therefore consider the subject in a *political* and *moral* view; it being in these relations principally that they affect individuals or society at large.

All

All ages and nations have had their public diversions. In proportion as the refinements of taste and manners consequent on civilization prevail, public diversions become less savage and barbarous. The Olympic and Isthmian games, the dreadful combats of wild beasts and gladiators, are now no more. Bull-baitings, throwing at cocks, and the sports of the bear-garden, are now detested by all except the lowest of the vulgar; and public diversions are substituted, which, however inconsistent with reason and sound philosophy, are far less shocking to humanity. This however does not alter their nature or effects on the people. As life of all things is the most uncertain, and as every hour has its duties, that almost universal thirst after diversion and unprofitable amusement, which this age exhibits, strongly proves the depravity of men's intellectual and moral powers.

This depravity has always been the prelude to destruction in all ages and nations. By the immoderate indulgence of sensual pleasure and dissipation, and inattention to their own interest and security, they have been gradually enervated and reduced to a state of vassalage and ruin. When the watchman slumbers on his post, an insidious enemy may easily obtain the honours of conquest.

It was in the hour of general festivity, excess, and inebriation, that Babylon gave to Alexander the triumphs of victory.

The Roman empire, great and stable as it was, began to exhibit evident marks of decay, when its senators and rulers exchanged their native simplicity of manners for the pomp of luxurious elegance, the feast, the dance, and the song; and thus set the example of licentiousness before the inferior ranks of the people.

While her Consuls, Tribunes, and Dictators, practised temperance, sobriety, and inflexible public virtue, she flourished, and gave laws to the world. True greatness and honour were not then confined to palaces: they shone in the village, the cottage, and the field. Cincinnatus at the plough was a far more praise-worthy and exalted character, and example of usefulness and virtue, than Cæsar at the circus, the theatre, or the triumph. But no sooner had the governors broke through those rules on which the preservation and safety of the empire depended, than the contagion spread with irresistible violence through all the subordinate ranks of the body politic. The free-men and plebeians soon extended the breach their
rulers

rulers had made, and followed them in every thing conducive to public ruin.

Thus it was with ancient Rome, once the glory of nations, now the seat of ignorance, superstition, and slavery; and as the same causes naturally produce the same effects, there is reason to fear thus it will be with Britain, unless the impending destruction be averted by a speedy and effectual remedy. This remedy must begin where the disease first took place; namely, in the highest ranks of the people.

Luxury and dissipation are among us arrived to a pitch unknown in former ages. The disease is almost epidemical. A few indeed there are, in all ranks, who still retain their senses amidst the general delirium; and whose examples shine with distinguished lustre. But if we view those in general who fill the higher ranks of life, how alarming is the prospect! With what eagerness do they pursue pleasure in all her varying forms! By their presence at, they support and give a sanction to, every expensive amusement that the desire of gaining money without labour has invented, or a vitiated taste imagined to be pleasing.

The

The opera, pantheon, theatres, masquerades, Fantocini, Ranelagh, Vauxhall, Cornellys', disputing societies, balls, races, gaming-tables, &c. principally divide their time and their money, and constitute a perpetual round of unprofitable and often of ruining folly.

While the great spend their time and fortunes in such a giddy round of expensive amusements, others, excited by the prevalence of their example, will imitate them to their ruin. By such conduct innumerable evils have been introduced to all ranks, even to the private tradesman. Every class have caught the infection; and we may say of the people in general, as Pope said of them on another occasion,

“ All quit their spheres, and rush into the skies.”

No sooner does one rank step out of their proper station, than the next succeeds it, and fills up the chasm.

The number of public places of diversion in and about the metropolis have long and justly been complained of as a nuisance to the state. They are certainly incompatible with the maxims of sound policy, and highly prejudicial to the morals and fortunes of the people. Many an unguarded
and

and inexperienced youth has, it is to be feared, been excited to commit acts of injustice to supply wants occasioned by the pursuit of expensive diversions; and proceeded from one degree of guilt to another, until the loss of liberty or life has put a period to his crimes.

In a moral light, public diversions will appear equally dangerous when thus multiplied. Every species of pleasure, however lawful under proper restrictions, become unlawful and hurtful when immoderately indulged. There is a fixed point at which we ought to terminate enjoyment, by retreating from the influence of its immediate cause, if we wish to preserve uninjured the faculties or organs through which that enjoyment is communicated. When extended beyond this point, the perceptive faculties and moral powers become relaxed; our finest feelings are destroyed; a kind of listless languor ensues; and we become unfit for the exertion of that fortitude which is necessary to repel the insidious as well as open attacks of vice.

Thus a constant round of diversions, even admitting them for argument sake to be *innocent*, enervates the mind, throws it off its proper guard,
and

and renders it more liable to receive injurious impressions, than while it remains protected by the rules of sober reason and inflexible virtue.

It was probably for this reason that the Lacedæmonians kept so strict a guard over their youth, lest by occasional indulgence the desire after and pursuit of pleasure should become habitual. They knew the authority of reason over the passions was more easily preserved than regained when lost; and therefore, under the government of the wise Licurgus, almost every species of luxury, intemperance, and vain amusement was prohibited. It was an established maxim among this sagacious people, that frugality and temperance preserved the faculties of the mind free and uninterrupted, and rendered the body most fit for vigorous exertion in a regular course of useful action.

Happy would it be for us, if our boasted refinements in scientific knowledge were accompanied with such simplicity of manners among the higher classes of the people. Till *they* set the example, there is little reason to expect that general reformation which can alone render us happy in ourselves, and truly honourable in the view of other nations.

The

The history of past ages, the natural course of human events, and the testimony of sound reasoning on established principles, all concur to shew us our folly and our danger. They predict, with indubitable certainty, the decline and fall of an empire already sensibly shaken.

But so little are considerations of this kind attended to, that we see almost every city and considerable town is now furnished with public diversions, which the wisdom of former ages would never have admitted.

Allured by these amusements, many may thence date their first deviations from virtue. The love of what is called harmless recreation has drawn them to be spectators of scenes, which they fondly hoped to retreat from with undiminished innocence. But many have thus been led by imperceptible gradations from pleasure to folly, and from folly into crimes which in the hours of sober reflection they would have trembled at the thought of committing.

I wish not however to be cynically severe on the failings of mankind. Charity forbids me to pronounce all those persons vicious, whom the desire

of pleasure, or the prevalence of fashion, draws to places of public amusement. But it certainly is a mark of inconsideration and folly in them, by a momentary gratification, to court danger, by thus approaching its vortex.

When a young gentleman has been three or four hours a spectator of the picturesque scenes of wantonness, the antic gesticulations or immodest dances sometimes exhibited in a comic opera, he naturally feels his passions excited and wound up to their highest pitch. Under these circumstances, he is much more liable to fall a sacrifice to vice, than if he had spent his evening in the innocent pleasures of domestic life, or the rational and manly entertainments of study or social converse.

When a young lady, by being present at such scenes as I have described, feels all her passions awakened and “tremblingly alive”;—when ideas are excited in her mind unfit for female delicacy to contemplate or even to admit; she is in the greatest danger of becoming a victim to the base designs of some vile betrayer; and of losing those inestimable jewels of innocence and honour which can never be restored.

When

When parents, by complying with the united solicitation of such amusements, and of their children to attend them, become at least the concurring means of all the injuries that ensue, how poignant must be the anguish they feel on such a reflection! How earnestly must they wish for the removal of those snares in which what was dearest to them have unhappily fallen.

And when the rulers of a state (who ought always to be conservators of public happiness and safety) receive frequent conviction that, these and other pernicious consequences result from causes so dangerous, how can they, as guardians of the people, continue to encourage, or even to permit their continuance and visible increase!

Would they but attend for a moment to the dictates of reason and good policy (not to mention religious considerations) they must be convinced, that however suitable many of our fashionable amusements may be to the standard of intellect and manners in France and Italy, they are far beneath the dignity of British understandings, and incompatible with that wisdom and virtue which ought to characterise the inhabitants of this enlightened island.

As vice is the proper object of aversion to every rational being, all the avenues that secretly admit it ought to be guarded with the utmost caution. And as vice is never so dangerous as when it assumes the mask of harmless pleasure, whatever tends to introduce it under that alluring form ought to be most studiously avoided.

Depraved as human nature is, men do not suddenly become really wicked. It is by slow gradations that vice as well as virtue gains absolute dominion in the mind,

View our public diversions in whatever light we can place them, they appear hostile to the morality, virtue, interest, and domestic happiness of a nation. As a people professing christianity, they are a reproach to us; but I forbear to enlarge on this head, because in a religious point of view no one will defend them.

But from the foregoing considerations I think it will evidently appear, that it highly behoves those who have the power in their hands, and ought to have the welfare of their country at heart, to prevent their influence, by lessening their number, and rendering the means of admission less easy to be obtained.

ON

ON THE ARTS AND SCIENCES;
 AND THE UTILITY
 OF A GENERAL KNOWLEDGE OF THEM,

WHEN we turn our eyes around us, and observe that variety of arts and sciences which ever flourish in an improved state of society, we are distracted by the too general survey; and, glancing over the surface of things, are apt to conclude, that the numerous discoveries and inventions of mankind have tended more to perplex life with fresh causes of disquietude, than to increase, by adding to its conveniencies and ornaments, the aggregate of human happiness. And the natural deduction is, that to spend our days in pursuit of the sciences would be a vain, unprofitable employment. We prefer the free and open paths of life to the trouble and difficulty of pursuing our way through the mazes of artificial perplexity.

But as we soon discover, that the application of the mind to some study or other is not only
 rea-

reasonable, but necessary to our well being in a civilized country, we consequently pursue certain objects selected by choice, or which our situation in life may have recommended to our attention. Often, we content ourselves with the acquisition of a single science, to the exclusion of all others: yet this is not all that is required of every individual by the calls of society. To those who have received, or are entitled to a liberal education, I beg leave now to address myself, and attempt to evince the usefulness of an attention to *all* the arts and sciences.

The arts are divided into the *necessary* and the *elegant*. By the necessary, I mean every species of mechanical operation. By the elegant, I understand music, painting, and poetry. The sciences are still more numerous, such as logic, mathematics, astronomy, metaphysics, &c. On tracing the causes of their invention, and their gradual progress and improvement, we shall soon be convinced of their utility. And by analysing any one of them, its beauty and usefulness might still further appear. For the mind, by a general view of the synthesis of things, is often led into an erroneous conclusion, while the truth is easily discoverable by an analytic investigation.

Now,

Now, in discoursing on the usefulness of a general knowledge of the arts and sciences, it seems an obvious question, *Whether it is possible for a man to become master of them all?* A reply in the negative, appears equally natural and reasonable also.

To those who have been favoured with a liberal education, the elegant arts and the sciences are objects well worthy of attention. Even a slight acquaintance with the principles of mechanical arts may be attended with advantages by no means inconsiderable. We know that men of the first rank among the Jews made some handicraft business a part of their children's education. But when we reflect on the variety of all these, and the difficulty which attends the acquirement of a single art or science, and consider also the short time allotted for human existence, discouragement takes place, and we naturally think of abandoning a pursuit so arduous, and diverging into innumerable directions. Having justly inferred, that no man ever arrived at such a degree of perfection as to possess a full knowledge of them all, we consider such a being as existing only in the imagination ;

“ A perfect monster, whom the world ne'er saw.”

When

The acquirements of him who is said to possess universal knowledge, can only be superficial. Yet this superficial acquaintance with these useful branches of human literature will appear requisite on a farther enquiry into the subject. In our universities, it is always expected that a competent knowledge, at least, of the sciences be gained, as well as that of the learned languages.

This mode of education may be easily justified by the rules of sound sense; because it is likely to render a man more generally useful than he would be, were his studies confined to any single art or science. He who confines himself to one particular branch of study will contract a narrow way of thinking. But the man who is moderately acquainted with every branch of polite literature will doubtless enlarge his ideas, and derive to himself infinite satisfaction in the course of his studies. And moreover, he will probably render himself not only more agreeable, but more generally useful to mankind.

The most natural emotion in the human mind is curiosity. All men discover it, and in some or other of its objects it affords much of the pleasure they enjoy.

This

This insatiable passion experiences ample gratification in that novelty which arises from a variation of that vast scenery exhibited in the works of nature. By this passion we are inspired with ardour in our studies, and stimulated to perseverance by the hopes of new delight. An unremitting pursuit of every thing we feel ourselves ignorant of, is a certain indication of a curious and inquisitive mind. And may we not reasonably infer from hence, that the well-directed pursuit of all those three objects whose elegance or utility may recommend them to our regard, will prove a source of more pleasure to the mind, than the contracted study of any single branch of literature? In the mean time it will be granted that the former, in consequence of its diversity, only procures us a superficial knowledge; and that the latter possibly may render us perfect (or at least able) proficient in the subject of our choice. It seems, however, easy to evince the superiority of the former on considering it in almost every point of view; whether it respects the pleasure and advantage of individuals, or of society.

A mediocrity of talents is the lot of the far greater part of mankind. They have neither

strength of intellect, nor opportunity for curious researches or deep investigation. But in the distribution of genius, nature hath preserved almost an equality in the human species. It is but once in an age that she exhibits a man of very superior abilities to the world. The pre-eminence of a Locke or a Newton, will always raise admiration. We have little encouragement therefore, to imitate these great men in adhering to one particular study; since instead of affording any real benefit to others, we should thereby lose the greater part of our lives in visionary hypothesis' and idle speculations. We may hence be justified in concluding that, in general, a moderate acquaintance with many things is much more useful, than a deep knowledge of a few.

The value of every acquisition is only to be estimated by its use. If the streams of learning be diffusive, they must, in consequence of that diffusion, become proportionably shallow. But it is well known, that the deepest rivers are often confined wholly within their own banks, and glide uselessly along, whilst a variety of gently-diverging rills spread fertility and beauty where they flow.

With

With respect to the sciences, few men will dispute the uses resulting from a skill in the mathematics. It will habituate the mind to close reasoning, and gradually conduct it on the surest grounds to the most elevated heights of human science. Yet to be a *professed* mathematician, is by no means desirable; since one half of such a man's life must be devoted to that arduous study (to the neglect of more useful things) before he can acquire a superior knowledge therein. This is a sacrifice few men would be justified in making. After all, the mathematician would probably be incapacitated for social enjoyment, since from his want of acquaintance with fashion, and consequent singularity of behaviour, he would become every where ridiculous.

The lovers of poetry may produce an argument in their opinion, perhaps of a still more corroborating nature. They may observe that such a depth of learning might obscure the brilliancy of the fancy, and restrain the beautifully erratic wanderings of the imagination: for we know that the Muses (in their very nature superficial) can never flourish under the cold ungenial auspices of a *Euclid* or *Smiglecius*. With regard to the elegant arts, to be possessed of a poetical taste

would set off the character of a student in more pleasing colours, and prove a source also of the most rational amusement.

But to become a professed poet would be to waste that time amid the delusive charms of an indolent occupation, which should be allotted to more serious employments.

Perhaps the same may be observed in general, of the two other sister arts, music and painting: as a relaxation from severer studies, they merit our regard and attention; but to devote to them the whole of our hours, would, to say the least, prove an unprofitable employment; yet this is too often the case with those who have arrived to excellence in these arts, particularly in our universities. These sister arts, which so eminently tend to call forth the finer powers of the imagination, and to embellish life, never appear so beautiful as when united in a gentle harmony with each other; yet few instances occur of a good poet, painter, and musician in the same person.

The polished scholar, and the accomplished gentleman, when blended in one character will always please. The ease of true politeness, and the

the elegance of the arts, will add the most agreeable lustre to the severer sciences;—will diffuse a tranquility over the mind like the temperature of sunshine and of shade in a region of perpetual spring.

On the other hand, a profundity of science merely, is often accompanied with moroseness, severity, and ignorance of the world. The man of general, although superficial knowledge, will shine in every company; for he will never be at a loss for a topic of conversation. If he possess a social turn, he may form the most pleasing connexions; and in all his associations the pleasure he sees diffused over every countenance, will gratify the benevolence of his heart.

The character of Cæsar was perhaps, the most complete that ever shone in the annals of ancient story. He was a polite scholar, an accomplished gentleman, and an illustrious general.

But on the contrary, the morose philosopher, although weak as his fellow creatures, looks upon them with an eye of contemptuous superiority. Lost in the abstractions of science, he grows pale with studious care, while every tender, humane affection

affection is obliterated in his breast. He may, as a learned author has observed, "contemplate the moon through his telescope, and behold her seas, her mountains, and her promontories;" but with all his profound theories, he is lost to the most innocent delights of a rational creature. When he steps into the social circle, he appears like an ignorant rustic in a court; and, notwithstanding his superior learning, often becomes the object of ridicule and contempt.

It is true indeed, that

"Though all the stars

"He knew by name, and all th' ætherial pow'r's,"

the philosophy of Aristippus qualified him for behaving in all circumstances with gracefulness and propriety. But this originated in a general acquaintance with men and manners; and indeed with all those objects which generally engage the pursuit of mankind. The universal knowledge he possessed was doubtless superficial. Such also was that of Chesterfield, the Aristippus of modern days. And would not the mere philosopher, the *plodder* in science, felicitate himself on the acquirement of those engaging arts possessed by an Aristippus or a Chesterfield? Would he still languish amidst the gloom of obscurity, were he qualified

qualified to communicate with the world, and enjoy the pleasures of social intercourse? Surely, were he sensible of the importance of social duties, he would fly from his cloistered retirement, and review with anguish the hours he had spent in solitude.

The admirable Burke has very justly observed, that “without the polish of the elegant arts, the “greatest proficiency in the severer sciences will “always have the appearance of something illiberal.” Poetry, the most elegant of the arts, is not only calculated to please, but gives a refinement and energy to all our studies. Whilst an ornament to a state, its progress greatly contributes to the improvement of rational manners, and cherishes the milder affections.

It was no inconsiderable objection to the boasted institutions of Lycurgus, that he neglected so much the cultivation of the polite arts, and exercised the people only in gymnastic and military manœuvres; as if these alone were sufficient to answer the purposes of existence.

What though in their schools and popular assemblies they were taught to listen to the instructions of heroes, and to imbibe that martial spirit
which

which prompted them to actions deemed illustrious? What though skilled in the most athletic exercises, and inspired by the *Genius* of their country, they successfully practised the arts of stratagem, or acquired the applause of their leaders by more open methods of resistance? Still their virtues were only of the ferocious kind, unfriendly to humanity; and they remained involved in the mists of ignorance and barbarism. The most animated picture of the Spartan state, only raises our minds the most expressive imagery of imperfect civilization. Those charities which most adorn the heart, and dignify human nature, are lost amidst the visionary delusions of warlike virtue.

It is from the polite arts that the pleasures of society have been heightened, and the miseries of life alleviated. It has however been objected that the diffusion of classical literature hath been productive of that refinement which soon degenerates into effeminacy and sensuality. But it requires very little experience to convince us that the effeminate, in general, are men of no intellectual cultivation. True philosophy, and true politeness can never contribute to the corruption of human manners. But a degeneracy of literary taste is the sure prelude to political declension.

If

If we take a transient view of the Athenian state, the difference of manners and police in Sparta and in Athens will be obvious. The more we contemplate these rival states, the more strongly we shall see them contrasted. In Athens was centered all the wisdom of Greece; and from this seat of the Muses was derived all the literature of the ancient world. Their heroes, unseduced by the enthusiasm of military glory, dismissed the tumultuous ideas of battles and of victories, and devoted their tranquil hours to the charms of philosophy. Their nobles and statesmen attended to the instructions of a Socrates and a Plato amidst the groves of Academus. Thither resorted the Princes of distant climes, to taste the sweets of learned leisure, and enjoy the friendship and conversation of refined and elevated understandings. From this diffusion of wisdom and knowledge arose the happiness of the state.

But let me close these remarks with a brief survey of far more interesting scenes than the faded prospects of antiquity:—prospects which, although they please in the distant retrospect, because adorned with some objects so luminous and striking as to give delight, and awaken admiration in every beholder, are still replete with the deepest

shades, and enveloped in a mist, which the radiance of truth and science has dissipated in later ages.

It is in our own country that we may best observe the cultivation of manners, of reason, and of talents. It is here that the heaven-born mind, unshackled by the fetters of bigotry or tyranny, exults in its native freedom, and pursues its flight in regions unexplored by former ages and nations. It is here that polite scholarship and liberal manners are rewarded with the warmest applauses. It is here that learning in all its various branches flourishes under the auspices of a Monarch whose patronage of the sciences and the arts adds lustre to royal dignity, while the brightest productions of genius complete the triumph of the Muses.

THE ISLE OF POPLARS.

To the Memory of ROUSSEAU.

[Written by, and inserted at the request of a Friend.]

The Isle of Poplars (which is now called Elysium) is situated near the Castle of *Ermenonville*, seat of the Marquis de Girardin. In this isle were deposited, by order of the Marquis, the remains of *Jean Jacques Rousseau*. The following very picturesque description of this little island may not be unpleasing to our readers.* “The spot is charming, and looks like an “enchanted region. The water which surrounds it flows in “a silent stream, and the winds seem unwilling to ruffle “its surface, or augment its motion, which is almost imperceptible. The small lake that is formed by this gentle current, is surrounded by hillocks, which separate it from the “other parts of nature, and shed on this retreat a mysterious “kind of silence, that diffuses through the mind of the spectator a melancholy propensity of the humane kind. These “hillocks are covered with trees, and are terminated at the “margin of the lake by solitary paths, which are now, and will “be long frequented by sentimental visitors, casting a pensive “look towards Elysium.” This romantic picture gave rise to the subsequent trifle—an effusion of an idle hour, which the author submits with all diffidence to the inspection of the Public.

IN yon isle, where the wings of silence seem
To hover o’er the circling stream,
The relics of departed genius sleep!

3 M 2

Assembled

* See Monthly Review for February 1779. Foreign Literature.

Assembled there, the Maids
 Who love those favourite shades,
 Pale as the poplar shall in anguish weep.

Fled are the visions of romance!
 No more to wake the dance
 Float airy warblings from the lute of love;
 While viewless powers around,
 Charm'd by the silver sound,
 Scatter'd with many a simple sweet the grove!

Ye poplars that delight to wave
 Your boughs o'er yonder grave,
 Such as of ancient days your amber shed;
 Let sweets from all the vale
 Come wafted on the gale:
 So fragrant sorrows shall embalm the dead.

But lo! with blushing field-flowers strung
 Her golden locks among,
 On ROUSSEAU's tomb reclin'd, a female form!
 Behold the lucid tear
 Thro' her green veil appear,
 That shook by sighs betrays the wild alarm!

'Tis FANCY——thus near Avon's tide,
 Her rude wreaths scatter'd wide,
 Such artless charms arrest the pensive eye;
 There oft her strains of woe
 For her own Poet* flow,
 And sweetly on the trembling zephyrs die!

* Shakespeare.

Amid these fairy scenes awhile
Elysium's loveliest isle,
Oh Fancy, shall thy wand'ring steps delay!
And Wit, whose various gems
"That share each other's beams"
In cold collision glance a fainter ray.

But oh! the Muse beholds in sighs
Fantastic shapes arise
With air grotesque, in motley garments drest;
The wizzard passions wild,
And Frenzy's fav'rite child
Caprice, oft varying herameleon vest.

Yet here while float these antic forms
To mar Elysium's charms,
Each image Candour's sober eye surveys;
He knows how genius fires
The soul with wild desires,
And flings o'er Virtue's self th' eccentric blaze.

Inspir'd with fairer—lovelier views,
The solitary Muse
Marks *Ermenonville's* melancholy shade,
Where oft her lov'd ROUSSEAU,
With pensive steps and flow,
Join'd sweet Simplicity, his fav'rite maid.

And on that hour her thoughts shall dwell,
When oh! with long farewell,
Sudden his gentle spirit fought the sky!

Ah!

Ah! then was heard a wail
O'er *Ermenonville's* dale—
Then glow'd the pearly drops in Nature's eye,

Near yonder spot their offerings join
At Nature's holy shrine,
The smiling babes of innocence and love!
The hand of friendship gave,
To deck the sylvan grave,
All that can fancy fire or pity move!

Each morn shall breathe its softest breeze,
Amid th' embow'ring trees,
Where *ROUSSEAU's* dim stone glimmers o'er the scene!
The sod that wraps his clay
Shall blush, each orient day
Shed flow'ry sweets, and catch a brighter green!

And Venus' solitary star
Shall love to hover near,
While in mysterious silence sleep the streams,
And there with transient glow,
The western sun shall throw
The last faint blushes of his ev'ning beams.

ON SENSIBILITY, OR FEELING, AS OP-
POSED TO PRINCIPLE.

THAT it is the interest of every individual to contribute, as far as his influence may extend, to the general good, will appear an undeniable position, when we consider that his own happiness is indissolubly connected with the happiness of the whole. The preservation and security of every man arise from a coalition of interests, and depend on mutual exertion. If then a reciprocation of good offices be necessary to the well-being of society, it is natural to infer, that a disposition to do good must, in some degree, be common to all men.

To this end, therefore, a certain portion of benevolence hath been implanted in every breast; for in the performance of social duties, our reason perhaps might exert too cold an influence. But all do not possess the benevolent and tender affections in an equal degree. One man has finer feelings than another, and is more easily disposed

to rejoice with the happy, or mourn with the afflicted. As this disposition very naturally conciliates regard, we view those who possess it with the most favourable prepossessions, and often esteem them in proportion. Sensibility has charms of a captivating nature. The very idea of it awakens the softer passions; and the *Man of Feeling* is an interesting character.

But are we not indulging a pleasing delusion? We ought always to suspect the truth of the opinions we form, while we find ourselves influenced by the impressions of prejudice or passion. The feeling, open-hearted man has been often contrasted with the sly dissembler, with the sanctimonious hypocrite; and a decision in favour of the former has always been the consequence.

But let us now oppose him to the *Man of Principle*: we shall then see the former will be actuated by passion, the latter by reason. The conduct of the one will appear wild and impetuous; of the other, cool and deliberate. In the one instance it will be eccentric, and often extravagant; in the other, steady, and proportioned to the end. The man of principle will act from a uniform plan, but the man of feeling from the impulse of the moment.

PHRONIMUS

PHRONIMUS was a man of reserved disposition, and from a settled habit of thinking much, and saying little, his countenance had contracted the appearance of moroseness: yet he was happy in a serenity of temper, and behaved with ease and affability to all with whom he conversed. By the frequent exertions of his judgment, he had acquired an almost infallible certainty in his decisions: yet he never offered his advice without diffidence, though all his acquaintance conferred on him the flattering distinction of asking it on every important occasion.

But this was not all: To strengthen his reason and regulate his conduct, he had called in the aid of Religion. Whatever he did was done with a view of pleasing the Deity. He judged of all men with candour, and seemed hurt at every insinuation that might injure the character of another. Notwithstanding this, he possessed but a small degree of feeling; and yet he practised that first of christian duties, *Charity*, in its fullest extent. He seldom dropt a tear at the sufferings of others; but often threw himself in the way of the unfortunate, with a view of offering them consolation. He visited the solitary abodes of want and sickness,

and "made the widow's heart to sing for joy." In short, he was *a Man of Principle*.

BENEVOLUS was formed of a very different contexture: his passions were impetuous—his sensibility was exquisite. Possessed of affluence, he distributed his bounty with an ardour that might be termed the spirit of enthusiasm, and a profusion that might be called the madness of extravagance.

The exertions of his judgment were feeble; for the judgment is a faculty that is always weakened by the heat of the inordinate affections. He was elated beyond measure at any circumstance of good fortune, and depressed to the lowest degree of dejection at the disappointment of his hopes, or the miscarriage of his most trivial pursuits. If he beheld an unhappy object, he sincerely pitied its distress, and hastened to its relief. But from possessing so little discernment, he was often deceived by the artifice of impostors. Thus, while his heart melted at the tale of fictitious calamity, he frequently lavished his wealth on the most undeserving and infamous of mankind.

With all his refined feelings, he had however very little sense of religion. He seldom looked
up

up with gratitude to the Great Author of all things, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift. Fond of convivial scenes, he indulged with his friends in the frequent debauch; and, to the disgrace of a reasonable being, suffered himself to be hurried by passion into all the excesses of sensual gratification. However, (as the world phrases it) he had a *good heart*, and was generally esteemed (the most amiable of all characters) a *Man of Feeling*.

In this age of sentiment, such characters as this of Benevolus are objects of popular eclat, and caressed with admiration. In the erring estimation of superficial minds, the weakness of a tender heart supplies the want of religion, and appears more lovely than all the virtues. And hence arise those vain pretenders, who impose on the *sentimentalist* by an affectation of sensibility. Perfectly experienced in all the obliquities of simulation, they can assume the soft emotion, and drop the tear of fictitious tenderness, at the miseries of a fellow-creature for whom they feel no real compassion; and having charmed the unwary with ideas of their superior benevolence, can cover perhaps the basest of intrigues under the semblance of virtue.

Observation will also evince that a man of *real* feeling can most easily and frequently initiate himself in all the mysteries of intrigue, and prove himself by no means inadequate to the gentle gallantries of *fashionable* friendship. "Tremblingly alive all over" he sighs his passion at the feet of his fair one, while his eye glistens with love in all the expressive eloquence of silent sensibility. And (dear congenial souls) his fair one catches the soft contagion, and blushes at a language her heart acknowledges and approves! But, fluttering at the consciousness of guilty feelings, she tells him in broken accents, that *she pities him*—and flies from his presence. He exults with an unholy joy at the favourable symptoms; for at least, he knows that "Pity is akin to Love." He repeats his visits with increasing assiduity and ardour, till her gentle nature yields, for she fancies his sensibility is virtue!

But alas! she soon awakes from this delirium of the senses: the dreams of fancy vanish, and in vain she solicits the delusion! She is lost—irrecoverably lost! and perhaps a whole virtuous family is involved in the dreadful catastrophe!

This

This is the work of an *unprincipled man of feeling*, whose nerves, with peculiar irritability can tremble every hour at the touch of joy or woe; whose finely-fibred heart would thrill perhaps with horror at the sufferings of—a fly. Nevertheless many a fair advocate will plead for him; and is not female eloquence irresistible? Are we not in love with sensibility when we behold in *her* the attachments of endearing friendship, the transports of overwhelming joy, and the sympathies of romantic affliction? While she bends, dissolved in tenderness over the “bosom-soothing page,” must we not venerate the works of a Sterne, though blended with trash and obscenity?—Must we not applaud the gently-yielding angelic Eliza,* while, far above the scenes of common life, she soars amid the regions of sentiment, and despises the vulgar notions of conjugal affection?—

Such, alas! is the weakness of the human heart, and the seduction of the senses, that in perusing the writings of many modern *sentimentalists* we thus catch the contagion of romance, and feel ourselves affected by passions, which if too much indulged will enervate all the noblest powers of the mind, and lead us insensibly to the vicinage of destruction.

Biaised

* Of Rousseau,

Biaffed by these false prepossessions, we too easily excuse the most unpardonable excesses in an author whose abilities and productions we admire. We can overlook (for instance) the shameful indolence and dissipation of a Collins, and even anticipate the plausible apologies of his elegant biographer. We think there is a *merit* in being possessed of *feeling*, and seem pleased with that extravagance and inconsistency its sudden impulses so frequently produce. We love the contrast of a generous open-hearted man, with the sly designing hypocrite,

Hence the productions of Fielding, and the rest of our best novel writers, if they have not injured the cause of virtue, have never contributed to its support or advancement. The character of *Charles*, in the *School for Scandal*, serves only to impress the heart with false ideas of things, while it exhibits to us a picture of vice in pleasing colours. But lest it should be said that argument has been superseded by public declamation, let me for a moment coolly consider the subject, as I draw near to its conclusion. It will perhaps be found on examination, that we cannot reasonably ascribe the least merit to a *man of feeling*, when we view him

him merely as such, and exclusively of all other parts of his character.

With regard to the qualifications we have acquired by our own exertions or industry, our conduct may deserve praise; but we cannot in justice be either blamed or commended for any thing we may possess without our own efforts or consent. Now *sensibility* (or *feeling*) cannot be acquired by any exertion of our own, it is a gift of nature. The seeds of it are sown in our hearts without any co-operation of our's: and therefore we can claim no more merit in consequence of possessing it, than in that of beauty, or wit, or any other attribute of the body or mind.

If then there be no merit in possessing sensibility itself, we cannot ascribe any to those acts which flow from it. To relieve a distressed object in consequence of the suggestions of a benevolent heart (abstractedly from every other motive) cannot be considered as meritorious. The scene that excited *our* warmest pity may be passed by with cold disregard by another, whose heart is less compassionate: yet no fault is to be imputed to him, because nature has not made him equally feeling with ourselves. Nevertheless, he should
have

have known that charity is one of the first and most essential duties of the christian religion: and this principle should have prompted him to heal the wounds of the afflicted, to soften their sorrows, and to succour the wretch that struggles with adversity. To do good from temper or inclination merely is not charity. The world indeed may profit by our generosity, but we shall not profit ourselves. These benevolent propensities are so fluctuating in their nature, so various in their tendency, that while unrefined and undirected by religion, they will often seduce us into the mazes of error and of vice, while we fondly deem ourselves secure in the ways of virtue.

But virtue consisteth in the subjection of the mind to known duties; and charity is a steady uniform principle, unconnected with *passion*, and founded on *reason* and on *truth*.



F. I. N. I. S.

